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Rosemary Westwood on the day Jian Ghomeshi broke his silence

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TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Airbnbers beware

COMPLAINTS

Councillor wants tougher rules, says city is lagging

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

A Toronto councillor is accusing the city of "dragging its feet" when it comes to regulating short-term rental services like Airbnb.

Coun. Kristyn Wong-Tam first brought the issue to the attention of city staff last year, after residents complained a house in her ward was rented on Airbnb and used to host raucous parties.

"There were fights outside and public disorder ... it was no different than what you'd see in the Entertainment District," she said.

A similar situation in Mississauga made headlines this week, and has local politicians pressing for regulatory changes.

Wong-Tam moved a motion in December asking city staff to investigate ways of regulating short-term rentals. However, months later, she says nothing's been done.

"We don't anticipate anything coming back from staff anytime soon. We were told the work would begin in September of 2016," she said.

In the meantime, she said, people are using Airbnb to skirt zoning bylaws and run quasi-legal hotels — or worse.

Wong-Tam says police have told her about Airbnb units used as "roving crime scenes" for drug dealing and human trafficking.

She's also concerned landlords are evicting tenants in order to make more money using sites like Airbnb and FlipKey.

"That should be a real concern for a city that has so little affordable housing," she said. "It's the most vulnerable residents who are being given eviction notices."

Wong-Tam would like to see Airbnb prevented from operating in Toronto until the city decides how to regulate it, but she doesn't believe a ban is feasible. Instead, she wants staff to fast-track a report on the issue and ensure enforcement mechanisms have teeth.

Toronto condo lawyer Denise Lash said other cities have successfully regulated Airbnb. Berlin has banned tourists from renting entire apartments, while San Francisco has imposed rules on short-term rentals, including requiring hotel taxes to be paid and preventing people from renting homes they don't live in.

"There's a lot of regulation that can be done by the municipality and I think it should be done," Lash said.

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news

After online groceries, Amazon launches into meal kit delivery

5 WAYS TO PUT CYCLISTS' MINDS AT EASE

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

As cyclists return to their two-wheeled commutes for spring, drivers are being reminded to stay alert. "Many people are back out there on the roads, so for drivers it's really important to pay attention to ... vulnerable road users," said Cycle Toronto director Jared Kolb. Here are Kolb's five tips for drivers on how to share the road with cyclists.

1 The one-metre law

As of Sept. 1, 2015, drivers are required to leave one metre of space when passing cyclists.

"It's not only the safe way to pass, it's now the law in Ontario," Kolb said, noting the fine starts at $110 and two demerit points.

2 Cyclists can 'take the lane'

"If there's debris on the roadway or unsafe driving conditions, then cyclists have the right, by law, to take the whole lane," Kolb said.

"It raises the ire of some drivers, but it's important to understand that cyclists are doing that because they don't feel safe."

3 Don't stop or park in bike lanes

Stopping in a bicycle lane, even briefly, "is not only illegal but also dangerous," said Kolb, noting it forces cyclists to enter traffic unnecessarily.

"Convenience doesn't trump safety," he said, "so either park in an adjacent lane or move to side streets so you're not blocking the bike lane."

MAPPED

At least seven people were hit by vehicles in Toronto on Tuesday, including five cyclists and two pedestrians. In one particularly distressing incident, a woman was pinned underneath a vehicle after it jumped the curb and struck her while she was cycling in the Distillery District. Another cyclist was pinned underneath a truck at Lakeshore Boulevard and Logan Avenue. Fortunately, police say none of the victims suffered life-threatening injuries.

4 Yield when turning right

Right turns are one of the situations where bicycles and cars are most likely to come into conflict, so Kolb advised drivers to check their blind spots and yield to cyclists when turning right.

"It's always good for a driver to give the cyclist the right of way," he said.

5 Support separated cycling infrastructure

Kolb said the best way for drivers to share the road with cyclists is to support measures that mean they don't actually have to share the road.

"Because of the risk of interacting with slower-moving vehicles, drivers should be supporting a citywide network of protected bike lanes. Adding a hierarchy and order to our streets is good for everyone," he said.

Mall becoming more pedestrian-friendly

SHOPPING

Owners adapt to changes in Don Mills neighbourhood

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Should Toronto's malls be more pedestrian-friendly?

Cadillac Fairview thinks they should be, and it's spending $21 million on Shops at Don Mills to make the point.

Already one of the more walkable malls in the city, Shops at Don Mills opened in 2009 after Cadillac Fairview tore down the old Don Mills shopping centre. However, the neighbourhood around Don Mills has changed in seven years, and it's time for the mall to adapt, said Niall Collins, Cadillac Fairview's vice-president of development.

Artist renderings show the renovated Shops at Don Mills mall will feature wider sidewalks and more pedestrian amenities.
COURTESY CADILLAC FAIRVIEW

"There's been an evolution in how people are using the mall and we're responding to those changes," he said.

Two residential towers have sprung up near the site and four more are on the way. With the influx of residents, Collins has noticed more people are walking or cycling to the mall.

To wit, Cadillac Fairview is removing some street parking to make way for more patio space, wider sidewalks and street furniture. There are also plans to cordon off the road to cars in the summer and host events.

"It'll be more like a village or town centre," Collins said.

Much of the asphalt will be replaced with cobblestones, in order to remind drivers to be mindful of strolling shoppers.

"Cobblestone makes it noisier for drivers and encourages them to slow down," Collins said.

"It looks great and creates a nice texture, but it's also a safety feature."

Collins said the mall's parkade is being retrofitted to make up for some of the lost parking spots. Drivers will be encouraged to park there and then move through the mall on foot.

"It's about putting the car away for a while," he said.

The renovations are already under way, and Cadillac Fairview expects them to be complete by the end of the year.

UBERX

Taxi firms say they reject surge pricing

The city's largest taxi brokerages say they will refuse to increase prices during peak periods despite new rules that allow them to do so.

Companies including Beck, City, Co-op, Crown, Diamond and Maple Leaf say they are rejecting surge pricing after council voted last week on new regulations that loosened rules for taxis — a move meant to allow them to compete with companies like Uber.

"We do not consider this to be capitalism, we call it extortion," said Rita Smith, executive director of the Toronto Taxi Alliance, which represents the brokerages and other industry members. "We will not be incorporating it into our business model. We believe that surge pricing has no place in superior customer service."

UberX, which is now in the process of being legalized, offers discounted rides in private cars. During busy times, those fares could multiply depending on the number of available cars. Under the new rules, UberX can still surge price, but the base fare will be on par with taxis at $3.25.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CRIME

Police seek armed robbers

Three schools were placed under hold-and-secure orders Wednesday morning after armed robbers struck a home in the Lawrence Avenue-Jane Street area.

Toronto police — called to Wright Avenue and Pine Street at 8:44 a.m. — say more than one suspect is being sought, but only one is armed with a gun. The armed man is described as Caucasian, with a thin build, about five feet tall, in his late teens or early 20s.

Weston Collegiate Institute, Weston Memorial Junior Publish School, and C.R. Marchant Middle School were briefly placed under a hold-and-secure order. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CELEBRATION

Birthday bash to cost city $8.4M

Toronto will throw Canada an $8.4-million sesquicentennial celebration including special New Year's Eve party, four-day Canada Day festival and people "reaffirming" their citizenship alongside new Canadians taking the oath.

The city is on the hook for half the cost of the 150th birthday events, a city report says, while the provincial and federal governments and "external sources" will be asked to pay the rest. Events will happen across the city but most will be downtown.

Events include New Year's Eve with live music in front of city hall and a four-day "flagship" Canada Day celebration at Nathan Phillips Square, plus events at North York and Scarborough civic centres and Etobicoke's Colonel Samuel Smith Park.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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IN BRIEF

New smuggling charge
A former Forest Hill restaurant owner charged with ordering a brazen gangland execution on College Street now faces fresh charges after a cocaine smuggling bust focused on Montreal's Rizzuto crime family. Martino Caputo, 42, was already in jail on a 12-year smuggling sentence when police announced the new charges against him Tuesday. TORSTAR

HEALTH

Lyme disease warning issued

Toronto Public Health is warning park-goers to be on the look out for blacklegged ticks.

The insects have the potential to spread lyme disease.

Areas in the city where the pests have been discovered include Morningside Park, Cedar Ridge Park and Rouge Park in Scarborough and Algonquin Island.

Signs have been placed in the areas, but Toronto Public Health said those should not be the only areas of concern. Ticks get around hitching rides on birds and other animals, and can easily make their way from one part of the city to another.

The risk of contracting lyme disease is low right now, the health department said. But, people should check their skin for signs of ticks after visiting wooded areas.

Symptoms include headaches, rash and fatigue. Lyme disease may cause lingering effects. SHANE PERUSSE/FOR METRO

Blacklegged tick. CONTRIBUTED

Device may halt snores

KICKSTARTER

Father-son inventors close to shipping peace-maker

Deena Douara Karim
Metro | Toronto

A variety of techniques can be used to deal with a partner's snoring: The nudge, the bounce, the cough, the pillow cave, the kick.

Toronto's Ali and Behrouz Hariri are hoping to add one more option: the Nora.

The father-son entrepreneurs say they've developed the world's first non-invasive "smart" solution to snoring.

The pitch: By simply putting a sleek piece of smart tech on your nightstand, you — and your partner — can rest peacefully.

The Nora website is chock-full of graphs, videos and testimonials pointing to the product's effectiveness, and nearly 3,500 Kickstarter backers are eager to believe them.

In fact, Nora's fundraising campaign has been wildly successful, raising more than $1 million US across 40 countries — eight times their goal.

The blessing has also, seemingly, been a curse. Some early backers have begun to get agitated, with some demanding refunds due to delays (which are quite typical for Kickstarter projects). While prototypes were developed in Toronto and the U.S., the team has just secured a manufacturer overseas.

"It's a very different scale," Behrouz Hariri explained in a phone interview, taking a break from 15-hour days visiting factories in China. "We are making sure the right pieces are there for a quality outcome ... We want to stay true to the promise."

Accompanying him is his father — "chief snorer" Ali Hariri, an immigrant from Iran and a serial inventor. After 30 years of marriage it occurred to him one sleepless night that there should be an automated way to overcome snoring.

Ali shot out of bed and headed to his garage, a tinkerer's mecca of pipes, wiring, fabric and plastics interspersed with prototypes for sporting goods, massagers and desalination kits.

That first attempt was about two years ago and now, finally, Behrouz says things are "looking great" to deliver Nora this fall.

WHY SLEEP IS HOT

If you've noticed a lot of sleep talk lately, it's not only because you likely lack it. Media mogul Arianna Huffington has made it her mission to reprioritize good rest in a culture that seems to value everything but. Last month she released her book The Sleep Revolution, about the "crisis" that is burning us out. She has taken that message to the World Economic Forum, TED talks, Forbes, Time and the Globe and Mail. HuffPo offices famously include nap rooms and Huffington has predicted such rooms will become "as common as conference rooms" within the next couple years.

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Falling for the arts in Niagara

CONTRIBUTED

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While the esteemed Shaw Festival Theatre gets set to raise the curtain on its 2016 season with the highly anticipated world premiere of Alice in Wonderland, the entire region seems poised for a show-stopping spring and summer.

From a vast array of stirring stage productions to major headline performers, Niagara, Canada, is brimming with events this season.

The new FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines, which opened its doors in the fall of 2015, is a 95,000-sq-ft. complex that boasts four state-of-the-art performance venues. And they'll all be busy this summer. The centre's upcoming lineup includes an evening with the irrepressible Canadian comedian Rick Mercer, bestselling solo pianist Jim Brickman, and the world premiere of Halfway to the North Pole, a play about a lonely doctor who finds himself in small-town Nova Scotia.

Nearby is the 5,300-seat Meridian Centre, which will host the 2017 Scotties Tournament of Hearts, the annual Canadian women's curling championship. In the meantime, the arena will stage such events as the Pride Niagara Kick-Off Party in late May and Theresa Caputo Live, a mesmerizing display by the reality-TV star.

There's no shortage of celebrity magic coming to Fallsview Casino Resort in Niagara Falls, where the audience can get up close and personal with some of the biggest headliners in showbiz in a lavish 1,500-seat auditorium. This season, Jay Leno, the B-52s and Neil Sedaka are among those gracing one of Canada's premiere live venues.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Jackson Triggs Amphitheatre is an outdoor venue that holds signature events such as the Amphitheatre Summer Concert Series. This year, the likes of Bruce Cockburn, Stars, Whitehorse and Dan Mangan are among the artists performing in the open air, under the stars. And don't miss the Safari Niagara Concert Series — live recreations of classic albums by the likes of Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin — or the Niagara Parks Commission's free Coca-Cola Concert Series every Friday, Sunday and holiday from May 20 to Sept. 5.

Throughout the region, visitors can catch symphonies, magic shows and a host of live performances from dynamic theatre companies in intimate settings. The Showboat Festival Theatre always presents a season of mystery, comedy and drama, while the Carousel Players is the award-winning professional theatre company for young audiences. And Seneca Queen Theatre, the beautifully renovated 300-seat venue in the heart of downtown Niagara Falls, presents everything from live tribute bands to film screenings.

The arts take over Niagara, Canada, all spring and summer long. From the theatre to the open air, it's a destination worth exploring.

Food truck debate stalled

RESTAURANTS

Mayor John Tory says new regulations are working

Food truck operators say the city needs to create more room on the road to allow for a vibrant, growing street food scene.

But a year after council continued to relax the rules governing where food trucks can park and how they do business, Mayor John Tory says he doesn't see the need for any more changes anytime soon.

And food truck patrons will have to wait at least another year for the debate to be revisited.

"I think that what we have to do is make sure that we have a fair chance given to the regime that's been in place now," said Tory, speaking to reporters at the launch of Food Truck Days in Nathan Phillips Square.

The proof that the new rules are working, the mayor said, is the growing number of trucks on the road.

Since the regulations were amended in May 2015 — most significantly reducing the distance trucks must park from brick-and-mortar restaurants from 50 to 30 metres — 44 permits have been issued, more than doubling the annual amount.

Eighteen of those permits have been handed out so far this year, nearly all of them the new six-month version allowing vendors to try the road business at half the regular $5,000 fee.

There are currently 49 permitted mobile food trucks in Toronto, offering everything from sushi to tacos to grilled cheese.

"What we'll have to see is how do they all do and what is the impact on the existing restaurant business and then it might be a fair chance at that stage to look at whether we make more changes," said Tory, who recently ushered in changes to a different set of licensing regulations to allow Uber and similar ride-hailing companies to compete against taxis.

"For now I think the rules we have seem to be working in terms of encouraging people with new ideas and new foods to come out and give people more choice and so I wouldn't see, for myself, any changes happening imminently."

The line up for food at Nathan Phillips Square Wednesday. The city has loosened food truck licensing rules to strike a balance and foster creativity, according to John Tory. CHRIS SO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **"The food truck issue has fallen off the city's agenda."**
> Zane Caplansky

Food truck advocate and restaurateur Zane Caplansky says he's disappointed by the stalled progress.

"The food truck issue has fallen off the city's agenda," he said, saying the Uber debate has recently dominated policy-makers' time.

The new rules, he said, were a good start.

After the vote last year, he vowed they would continue to push for 15 metres and eventually no distance restrictions at all.

"That was really only meant to step in the right direction. We're not at the finish line yet," Caplansky said.

"We scored a major victory a year ago for the birth of an industry. Now that the fears have been pushed aside by facts, let us operate." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MISSISSAUGA

Council suspends services like Uber

In a break from its giant neighbour to the east, Mississauga council has suspended all operation of ride-sharing services such as UberX.

The only way ride-sharing companies can now legally operate in Mississauga is if they effectively follow the same regulations governing traditional taxis, after Wednesday's unanimous vote.

But Mayor Bonnie Crombie left the door open, ever so slightly. In a 10-2 vote, council decided that if Uber and other ride-sharing services suspend operations immediately, a committee will be struck to look at a possible ride-sharing pilot project.

"I think it will make the industry very pleased," said Crombie, of the compromise, that leaves open the possibility of Uber to operate under different rules in the future. But taxi drivers who packed Wednesday's council meeting, flanking former mayor Hazel McCallion, say they are unhappy with the prospect of a pilot program. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Police stats show drug-driving on rise

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Concern about pending legal status of pot

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

A report that shows drug-impaired driving is on the rise in Toronto has some safety advocates concerned about the impending legalization of marijuana.

"We've had a horrific problem with deaths and injuries on the road because of alcohol and the last thing you want to do is promote more people on the road being impaired," said Toronto lawyer Patrick Brown.

Brown worries the federal government will legalize marijuana before technology is available to test for impairment at the roadside.

"Before there's legalization of any drug, the government must ensure they have the proper procedures to test, whether it's through saliva or something else, whether people are impaired," he said.

Toronto police data shows 25 drivers have been charged with impaired driving due to drug use in 2016, a 150 per cent increase over this time last year.

> **Impairment is impairment.**
> Const. Clint Stibbe

Although there's no breathalyzer equivalent for detecting narcotics or prescription drugs, Const. Clint Stibbe said officers are trained to spot and assess impairment.

"Impairment is impairment," he said. "The person is falling down, slurring their words or their co-ordination is gone."

In those cases, officers can take drivers to a police station for examination by someone specialized in assessing drug use. They can also order a urine sample to quantify how impaired a driver was at the time, Stibbe said.

"The system isn't broken by any means," he said. "We're aware impaired driving by drug use is occurring, we are watching and we'll get you."

Stibbe said the government is looking at devices for roadside drug screening and he's confident marijuana won't be made legal until those tools are in the hands of police officers.

Bill Blair, Toronto's former police chief turned Liberal MP, has been tasked with overseeing the legalization of marijuana. His office did not respond to Metro's request for comment on the issue.

This ominous ad along the Gardiner is the brainchild of agencies John St. and Cieslok Media. SCREENSHOT

TRAFFIC

Billboard is bogus but it gets attention

Colin McNeil
Metro | Toronto

Call it dark humour, call it offensive, or just call it effective.

However you feel about it, a new billboard near Toronto's Gardiner Expressway is doing one thing right — it's getting attention.

The ad, seemingly from a "Wathan Funeral Home" says simply "text and drive," with the funeral home's logo beneath.

The catch? Wathan Funeral Home isn't real.

The billboard is the morbid concoction of ad agencies John St., and Cieslok Media, designed to get Canadians to think twice before texting and driving. Distracted driving is "projected to kill more people in Ontario this year than drinking and driving," according to the faux-funeral home's website.

"We're just trying to get Canadians to stop texting and driving," it continues.

"While most people wouldn't even think about drinking and driving, over half of Ontario drivers admit to reading texts while behind the wheel. That's more than half of the drivers on the road today risking their lives, their passengers' lives and the lives of their fellow motorists and pedestrians."

Any angry drivers Googling to the ad will likely find their way to the site, which hopes the disturbing stats it displays about texting and driving "make you even madder than our billboard did."

IN BRIEF

Ban on daycare wait-list fees
Ontario will ban daycare wait-list fees, in new provincial regulations to be posted "very soon," Premier Kathleen Wynne says.

Wynne made the commitment in the legislature Wednesday in response to questions from the NDP's Peter Tabuns, who introduced a bill last week to address the issue.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Former CBC radio host Jian Ghomeshi leaves a Toronto court with his sister Jila after signing a peace bond on Wednesday. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Finally, we hear that famous voice again

metroview

Rosemary Westwood
Metro | Toronto

Finally, he spoke.

After 18 months of near-perfect silence, we heard that voice. Still full-bodied and low-toned. Still strong — projecting to the judge and behind him to the benches of reporters and his ever-present mother and sister.

It was Jian Ghomeshi, yes. But that voice, once his golden ticket, was used in a way we haven't heard before: In an apology.

At 10:09 a.m. on Wednesday morning, Ghomeshi stood in a half-filled courtroom at Toronto's Old City Hall to comply with the key component of the peace bond that cut short a second trial for a single charge of sexual assault and provided this swift, pre-emptive end to his legal woes. He said sorry to Kathryn Borel, once a producer on Q, his CBC radio show.

"I want to apologize to Ms. Borel for my behaviour towards her in the workplace," he began, his voice unmistakable.

Except now, in place of the come-hither croon, Ghomeshi gave carefully constructed distance. He used the impersonal diction of a disgraced politician ("I did not recognize that I crossed boundaries inappropriately"). He read the words, but without feeling.

And he spoke swiftly, like a man on a mission. Which he was. The statement led to the withdrawal of the final criminal charges against him and an end to the headlines and the kind of life where one of your closest confidantes is your lawyer.

There was only a vague reference to the specific incident — that he came up behind Borel at work and "held her waist and pressed his pelvis back and forth, repeatedly into her buttocks," to quote the Crown.

"This incident was thoughtless and I was insensitive," Ghomeshi said.

A letter submitted to court from Ghomeshi's therapist commended his "great commitment and focus" to understanding his behaviour. It was intended to underline his sincerity, but that's a hard thing to prove when Ghomeshi gets so much for seemingly so little: Legally, his apology holds no weight of guilt. Precise and clearly rehearsed, it also functions as a coming-out for the man who was once defined by his ubiquitous celebrity.

Still, for Borel, it offered the "clearest path to the truth."

And it was she who had the last word of the day.

"There are 20 other women who have come forward to the media and made serious allegations about his violent behaviour," she said outside the courthouse. "I think we all want this to be over. But it won't be until he admits to everything that he's done."

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Borel got first break at Q

PROFILE

CBC accuser as harsh with ex-workplace as with ex-boss

Kathryn Borel began working as a producer on Q when the CBC radio show first launched in 2007, helmed by Jian Ghomeshi.

It was her first big break, she has said.

Her reasons for leaving in 2010 became public in 2014 only as her former boss began facing multiple allegations of sexual harassment and sexual abuse going back more than a decade.

Borel, who had moved to Los Angeles by then, was initially unnamed in the investigation that described her account of Ghomeshi's increasingly abusive behaviour in the workplace.

In an opinion piece for the Guardian, where she first identified herself, she says Ghomeshi groped her and told her at a staff meeting after she yawned that he wanted to "hate f–k" her to wake her up.

Then came the conduct for which Ghomeshi signed a peace bond and apologized for Wednesday: repeatedly thrusting his pelvis against her buttocks while she leaned over a desk to get some papers.

Borel has been as harsh on her former workplace as on Ghomeshi. Her account of how CBC management failed to act on her complaints about Ghomeshi and fostered an intolerable work environment resulted in an internal review conducted by an employment lawyer.

In a 2013 interview with her friend, Canadaland podcaster Jesse Brown — who broke the allegations about Ghomeshi with the Toronto Star — she described how she got into, then out of, journalism at the CBC.

Brown described Borel as being "tone-deaf to office politics but pretty damned good at (her) job" working at the CBC, where she began at Metro Morning working as a chase producer on week-to-week contracts.

"You were like a bizarre, rabid unicorn at the CBC," he tells her. "You played by your own rules there in a way that would have gotten so many people fired instantly … "

"I definitely got rapped on the knuckles for my behaviour," Borel says. "I feel like I was doing a tightrope thing … I was also like very young. I started worked at the CBC when I was 23 years old. I was just doing what I thought was correct. I don't know, I definitely feel like I was without guile during those years."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kathryn Borel walks out of court after she agreed to a peace bond for Ghomeshi in Toronto on Wednesday. MARK BLINCH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Peace bond not admission of guilt

What is a peace bond?

It's an order by a criminal court that indicates the individual must basically stay out of trouble and abide by whatever conditions are imposed, similar to being released on bail.

It is not an admission of guilt or wrongdoing and does not result in a criminal record.

When are they used?

Historically they were used by neighbours trying to stop loud parties or parking in a shared right-of-way, says Pamela Cross, legal director for Luke's Place.

But in the past 20 years they have been increasingly used in domestic violence cases and in sexual assault cases. They are also increasingly used in terrorism cases when an officer argues there are reasonable grounds to believe someone may commit a terrorist offence.

When the Crown doesn't have a strong case, it may agree to withdraw the charge if the accused enters into a peace bond. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Marie Henein

> In the last 25 years in the criminal justice system, I have never seen a case like this one. I have never had a client be the subject of such an unrelenting public scrutiny and focus. I have been witness to it as closely as anyone can be. It is a focus that has not only been on Mr. Ghomeshi but also his family and those that have stood beside him.
>
> Marie Henein, Ghomeshi's lawyer

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The man who faced the fire

FORT MCMURRAY

As tens of thousands fled city, some chose to stay

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Hartley Bushell wasn't going to let flaming embers destroy his beautiful backyard.

As wildfires encroached on Fort McMurray last week, causing officials to command a mandatory evacuation order, Bushell stayed back with hoses at the helm.

Bushell didn't do it alone, either. He said he had his wife, Chalinee, at his side.

"My wife was in tears and wanted to leave, but I wouldn't do anything that would endanger her, ever, so I assured her we were going to be OK.

"I didn't want to see it go up in smoke because it would be a year later that I'd move into a plastic house — somewhere I don't want to be — and it certainly wouldn't have an outdoor kitchen and a water feature."

Sgt. John Spaans, with the Alberta RCMP, said there have been others who stayed put, though he wouldn't say how many, as officers don't want to discourage residents who fled.

He said RCMP can't force people to leave via arrest, unless they pose a danger to themselves and the public.

Bushell was told to leave numerous times, but said he knew he was in the clear.

"I'm not a daredevil," he said. "We maintained a vigilant, diligent spark watch. We had an easy escape route."

He said he used his neighbours' hoses to create a "wall of water" until about 1 a.m. Wednesday, as flaming debris blew in from the highway.

"We stayed the course and kept everything from igniting until the fire was no longer an immediate threat," he said.

Hartley Bushell and P.J. the pug. CONTRIBUTED

The next morning, he ventured to his friend's homestead, where he found a whimpering P.J. the pug among the rubble.

"I scooped him up and took him back to my place," he said. "I phoned the owner right away and the little girl was very happy."

"The firefighters have done a gargantuan, heroic job to keep this fire from destroying this city. They deserve every accolade," he said.

A home near Hartley Bushell's was destroyed after it caught fire last week. COURTESY HARTLEY BUSHELL

PREDICTIONS

Suncor hired own analysts

Suncor Energy has confirmed it used its own analysts to predict the path of wildfires near its facilities in Fort McMurray, and one source told Metro on background that it did so because it thought the government's fire modelling and predictions were potentially flawed.

Both the government and Suncor had fire prediction specialists that traced the path of the quickly spreading inferno.

Sneh Seetal, spokeswoman for Suncor Energy, couldn't say Suncor trusted the judgment of government analysts.

"It's not really a yes or no type answer — I think it's too simplistic and doesn't look at the complexity of the unprecedented situation," Seetal said.

Mike Long, spokesman for the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, said fire crews with oil and gas companies and the rural municipality focused on saving the city and its infrastructure, while government crews targeted the forest. He said the government and Suncor's analysts shared intel, but didn't provide specifics. JEREMY SIMES/METRO

RESIDENTS

Evacuees line up for government debit cards

Alex Boyd
Metro | Edmonton

Patrick Bailey and Korey Sweeney were in line in Edmonton by about 11 a.m. Wednesday, an estimated 100 people already ahead of them.

At the front of the line was what many of them desperately need: Money.

Last week, as a wildfire bore down on Fort McMurray, Bailey and Sweeney had only time to pack enough clothes to fill a duffle bag between them before fleeing.

But on Wednesday, the friends went to the University of Alberta in Edmonton as evacuees, and said the prize at the end of the long queue — debit cards with government money — would be going towards basic necessities.

"It'll help us get food, rent — just help us get back on our feet basically," Sweeney said.

Premier Rachel Notley announced Wednesday that Alberta will supply each adult who has evacuated Fort McMurray with pre-loaded debit cards with $1,250 on them, and also add $500 for each dependent child under the age of 18.

In response, evacuees from Fort McMurray queued in massive lines in Edmonton Wednesday for the money.

An hour before the government was to start distributing the cards, at 2 p.m., the line already wound through the Butterdome arena at the University of Alberta campus, out the door, down a ramp and around the block.

The reason was need: For Bailey and Sweeney, it will help pay rent for a new apartment in Edmonton.

"Going up there (to Fort McMurray) is just bad vibes now," said Bailey. "This happened, and you don't know if it's going to happen again. I'd rather start anew."

The debit cards will be available to anyone who had to leave Fort McMurray, regardless of their economic circumstances.

Notley stressed Wednesday that people who have money right now should allow those without the first spots in lines.

Fort McMurray evacuees wait for government debit cards with money pre-loaded on them. KEVIN TUONG/FOR METRO

PROM

Students will still graduate in style

Veronica Ostermann remembers that after the floods in 2013, many of her classmates either couldn't afford, or had lost, their prom dresses.

Ostermann said thanks to many charitable people in Calgary and surrounding areas, her classmates received donated prom attire that helped save their special day.

Now, with the help of volunteers across the country Ostermann is doing the same for Fort McMurray evacuees. Her team is gathering donated prom dresses, tuxedos, shoes and jewelry to help take some of the stress off of those displaced by the blaze.

"I started a Facebook page and at first it was just 50 people and all of a sudden within 48 hours it expanded to 2,000 wanting to help and donate or collect dresses," she said.

The Facebook page, Fort McMurray Grad Donation, set up by Ostermann, has had huge success — with hundreds of prom dresses being donated to evacuees.

Wheelchair burlesque aims to strip stigma

ENTERTAINMENT

Show to show disabled people have sexual identity

Talking about sex can be awkward for anyone, but some people with disabilities say expressing their most intimate needs can often feel insurmountable.

To challenge the taboo, a group of performers who have disabilities will bare their hearts and bodies in a new burlesque cabaret that includes a wheelchair striptease. The show weaves together comedy, sequins and silk gowns to dress up a topic that those involved say goes underexposed.

"We have a libido like everybody else," said Andrew Vallance, 35, who will host the show that opens this week in Vancouver.

"But there's a whole load of prejudice and institutional barriers that prevent us from expressing our sexualities. It's about time we knocked those barriers down."

The show, titled Sexy Voices, runs for three days starting Thursday. It will fearlessly thrust sex and disability into the limelight, said managing artistic director Rena Cohen, with the non-profit Realwheels Theatre company. It's not physical, but attitudinal barriers that are the greatest challenges for people with disabilities, Cohen said.

Along with being entertained, Cohen hopes audiences will acknowledge that many people with disabilities are denied sexual identities, ranging from overt stigma to incidentally not being perceived as having the capacity for intimacy.

The stories on stage will range from racy and sexually explicit to quite sweet, said director Rachel Peake. The goal is to portray people with disabilities as three-dimensional through the illumination of their sex lives, she said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Performer Alexis Chicoine fixes her hair before rehearsal for an ensemble burlesque cabaret show in Vancouver, on Tuesday. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

COURTS

Parents get probation for spanking daughter

A British Columbia couple found guilty of assault with a weapon for spanking their teenaged daughter with a plastic hockey stick and a skipping rope will not face jail time.

The parents from Salmon Arm, B.C., were given a conditional discharge Tuesday, meaning they will not have criminal records if they follow the court's orders and serve the 12-months probation handed to them by a judge.

They are also prohibited from doling out corporal punishment to any minors in their care, and both the mother and father will be required to provide a DNA sample.

Provincial court Judge Edmond de Walle convicted the couple earlier this year.

The trial heard that the mother and father spanked their 14-year-old daughter after they discovered she sent nude photographs of herself to a young man.

The father testified that he had "no clue" that corporal punishment is illegal when he spanked his daughter.

The girl's friends found out about the lacerations and bruises and went to school officials, who in turn notified the RCMP.

The parents' lawyer, Ian McTavish, noted at a sentencing hearing that the teenager is not the one who complained about the spanking. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

More mental health workers for Attawapiskat

Health Canada says it will fund two additional mental health workers and a case manager for youth in Attawapiskat to assist with the Ontario reserve's suicide crisis. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bob Geldof says Trudeau unambitious on aid targets

PM Justin Trudeau got a scolding from musician and activist Bob Geldof for failing to live up to his promise to spend 0.7 per cent of its gross national income on foreign aid. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Daesh advancing on Palmyra again

SYRIA

Militants seize strategic site near famous ancient city

Daesh militants advanced toward the central Syrian city of Palmyra on Wednesday, threatening to besiege the world-famous ancient site several weeks after the government recaptured it from the extremists.

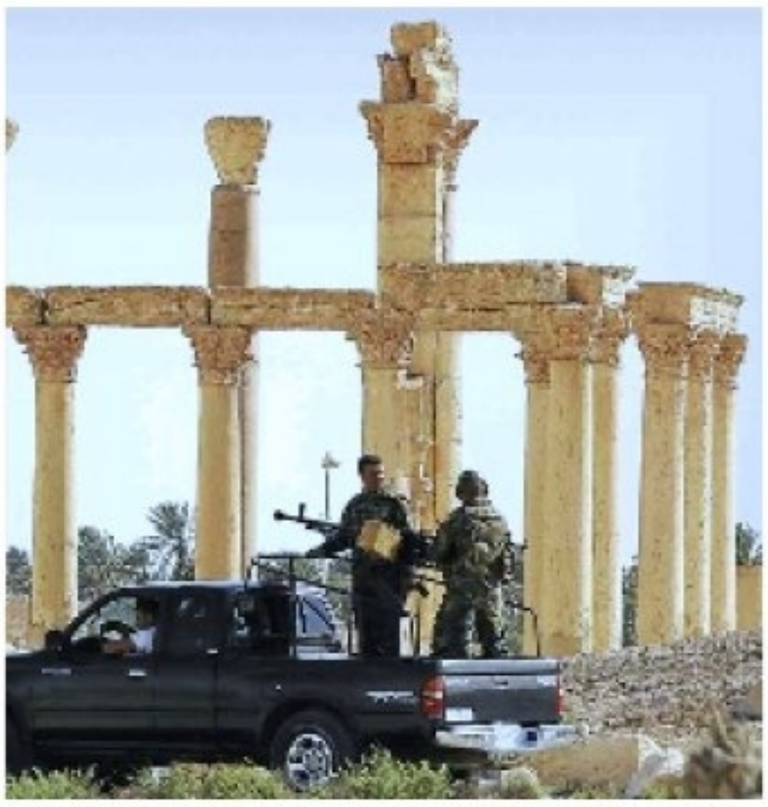
The offensive came as a ceasefire over the northern city of Aleppo ticked down to its final hours, threatening to plunge the divided metropolis back into violence. A rocket attack on a government-held neighbourhood late in the afternoon killed at least two people.

Media allied with the Daesh group and other activists said the militants seized a strategically located but deserted rocket-launching site close to an air base less than 60 kilometres from Palmyra. For the government forces, the capture effectively severs a highway linking Palmyra to the government-controlled T-4 air base and the provincial capital Homs, threatening government supply routes.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and other activists confirmed the reported Daesh advance. The development comes after intense clashes with government troops near the air base, and a week after the extremist group advanced toward natural gas fields to the north.

Al-Bayan radio reported that Daesh militants took control of the deserted site, seized two government checkpoints guarding the air base and downed a military helicopter to the north of the base. The Observatory also reported the downing of the aircraft but said the fate of its crew remains unclear.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Members of the Syrian army patrol as people visit the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra on May 6. Reports suggest Daesh are once again advancing on the city. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

EVEREST

Don't spray it on the mountain

Next time you leave silly messages on the world's highest mountain, beware: China is watching you.

Officials have scrubbed graffiti from two granite tablets on the Chinese side of Mount Everest's northern base camp and plan to name and shame future defilers.

Chinese state news reported Wednesday that workers removed signatures, dates, doodles and messages left by scores of visitors. They include "let's wander together," "farewell to the mountain" and "here I come."

The graffiti grew so thick it covered the information about the mountain carved into the tablets in Chinese, Tibetan and English.

The base camp at roughly 5,200 metres is a popular tourist site and has fallen prey to behaviour the Chinese government says is uncivilized and vows to punish. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mt. Everest THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILIPPINES

Allegation by VP candidate rebuffed

Philippine election officials challenged Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Wednesday to prove his allegation of irregularities in the counting of votes for vice-president, where he has been overtaken by his closest rival.

They also rejected Marcos' request for a stop to the unofficial tally by an accredited citizens' watchdog, which uses the same election returns that are transmitted to the Commission on Elections. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trump aiming for party unity

U.S. ELECTION

Front-runner has 92% of the delegates needed

Donald Trump is taking a run at party peacemaking now that voters have put him on a glide path to the Republican nomination. If he can't get restive Republicans like House Speaker Paul Ryan on side, he says he'll keep on winning anyway.

Trump now has 92 per cent of the delegates he needs to clinch the nomination, according to AP's count, after he earned a hefty haul Tuesday night in West Virginia and Nebraska primaries. He has the field to himself, but after having nearly closed the deal with primary voters, he's facing a Republican establishment that is deeply wary of his candidacy but has nowhere else to go.

Trump and Ryan are to meet Thursday, days after the speaker — the nation's top elected Republican — withheld his endorsement. Asked on Fox News what will happen if the meeting does not go well, Trump said: "We'll trudge forward and do like I've been doing, and win all the time."

Despite his unconcerned tone, much rides on the relationship he forges with party leaders. Trump's bare-bones campaign has glaring deficiencies the party apparatus is uniquely positioned to address. The New York businessman has largely ignored collecting information on voters he needs to turn out in November, sent few staff to battleground states and taken no steps to build a fundraising network.

"As we turn our focus toward the general election, we want to make sure there's the strongest partnership," Sean Spicer, the Republican National Committee's chief strategist, said of Trump.

Trump said he would not rely on public financing, a decision that forces him to quickly assemble a donor network capable of raising the estimated $1 billion needed to run a modern presidential campaign. For that, he is likely to have to rely on help from the party's extensive donor network.

Republican leaders in the Senate and at the RNC are urging members to get behind the billionaire and turn their energy toward battling Democrat Hillary Clinton. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **We have a nominee, it looks like he may well be very competitive, and we want to win the White House.**
> Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader

In India, right-wing activists make offerings to the fire god while conducting Hindu rituals to ensure a win for U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump. Trump's calls to temporarily ban Muslims from America and crack down on terrorist groups have earned him some fans in India. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONARCHY

Chinese officials 'rude,' says the Queen

The 90-year-old Queen has made a rare foray into political affairs, being caught on film characterizing Chinese officials as "very rude" in their dealings with British counterparts during a state visit last year.

Queen Elizabeth II. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Queen Elizabeth II made the unguarded comments Tuesday while talking to a senior police officer at a rain-soaked garden party on the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

With uncharacteristic bluntness the queen said the Chinese had not dealt properly with Barbara Woodward, the British envoy to China.

"They were very rude to the ambassador," Elizabeth said.

The comments were recorded by a palace-authorized cameraman working for three British networks and distributed to broadcasters. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Students in Thailand are using their smartwatches and glasses embedded with cameras as high-tech tools to help them cheat on exams. ISTOCK

THAILAND

Students use technology to cheat

Glasses with embedded cameras and smartwatches with stored information seem like regular spy equipment for the likes of James Bond, but for some students in Thailand, they are high-technology cheating devices.

Bangkok's Rangsit University cancelled its examinations on Saturday and Sunday for admission to its medical and dental faculties following the discovery of the unusual modus operandi by three female students.

While cheating has long been a problem in Thai schools and colleges, the use of high-tech gear — the cameras were used to take pictures of the test sheet and the smartwatches to receive answers from someone outside — has taken the practice to a whole new plane.

"We've never found cheating of this level — involving high-technology," university official Kittisak Tripipatpornchai said.

Cheating is a marked aberration in the list of good behaviour expected of Thais. From a young age, Thais are taught to be polite, tolerant, and respectful. But educators say cheating has flourished because of an education system that makes exam scores the only criterion for assessing a student's ability and granting admission into places of higher learning. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Google bans ads for payday loans

FINANCE

These types of lenders have been target of criticism

Internet giant Google said Wednesday it will ban all ads from payday lenders, calling the industry "deceptive" and "harmful."

Google's decision could have as much or even more impact on curtailing the industry than any move by politicians, as many payday loans start with a desperate person searching online for ways to make ends meet or cover an emergency.

Effective July 13, Google will no longer allow ads for loans due within 60 days and will also ban ads for loans where the interest rate is 36 per cent or higher. The industry will join Google's other banned categories of ads, such as counterfeit goods, weapons, explosives, tobacco products and hate speech.

"Our hope is that fewer people will be exposed to misleading or harmful products," said David Graff, Google's director of global product policy, in a blog post that announced the policy change.

Payday lenders have long been a target of criticism by politicians and consumer advocates, who argue the industry charges extremely high interest rates to customers, who are often the poor. Payday loans are often used to cover an unexpected expense or to make ends meet before the next paycheque. But for many borrowers, short-term loans wind up being difficult to pay off, leading to a cycle of debt that can drag on for months.

> **Our hope is that fewer people will be exposed to misleading or harmful products.** David Graff

A 2012 study by Pew showed the average payday borrower is in debt for five months, spending $520 in fees and interest to repeatedly borrow $375. The annual per cent rate on a payday loan is 391 per cent, according to Pew.

"There is nothing fair about triple-digit interest rates being charged on loans to working families," said Keith Corbett, executive vice-president with the Center for Responsible Lending, in a statement. "Google is to be praised for doing its part to limit use of these abusive loans."

In response to critics, the payday lending industry has long argued it provides a necessary financial service to people in need of emergency funds.

"These policies are discriminatory and a form of censorship," said Amy Cantu, a spokeswoman with the Community Financial Centers Association of America, the trade group representing payday lenders.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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PHILOSOPHER CAT by Jason Logan

CHANTAL HÉBERT ON VOTING REFORM

Surely on a matter that affects the way Canada's electoral life is governed, voters should be able to expect that MPs be allowed to weigh in on an equal basis, regardless of partisan affiliation.

Among Justin Trudeau's commitments, few are as time-sensitive as his promise to have a new voting system in place for the 2019 federal election.

And so, as the weeks eventually turned into more than half a year without any action from the incoming government, questions arose as to how committed the Liberals were to a promise they had made when they were twice removed from power.

Elections Canada needs about two years to have a new voting system up and running for the 2019 campaign. Presuming that the Liberals' promised electoral reform in good faith, only the search for a way to invest as much legitimacy as possible in the process could justify the delay.

Instead, on Thursday, the mountain gave birth to a mouse in the shape of a parliamentary committee that is special only in name. Its make-up replicates the very distortions that the Liberals claim to want to redress through electoral reform.

Like every other committee on Parliament Hill, it will feature a Liberal majority made up, in this case, of six government MPs with three Conservatives and one New Democrat rounding up the lot. The Bloc Québécois and the Green Party have been each assigned a seat, albeit at the equivalent of the children's table. Their respective representative will have no voting rights.

The latter is generous only by the standard of the parliamentary rule that denies official status and de facto committee spots to parties that fail to elect at least 12 MPs. But in the larger picture, the condescending Liberal approach to the place of the smaller parties in the debate amounts to treating the 1.5 million Canadians who supported the Bloc and the Green Party last fall as second-tier voters.

Surely on a matter that affects the way Canada's electoral life is governed, voters should be able to expect that MPs be allowed to weigh in on an equal basis, regardless of partisan affiliation.

As if Liberal control of the committee was not enough, there is no commitment on the part of the government that it would use its majority to introduce a new voting system unilaterally and no pledge to submit the result to a plebiscite before implementing it.

If only based on the calendar, there is no time to both bring a new voting system to a referendum and put it in place for the next federal election. A committee set up on the eve of the dead political season that is the Canadian summer will already have to take more than a few shortcuts if it is going to a) consult widely and b) come up with a recommendation in time for a Dec. 1 deadline.

Mind you, based on the recent experience of the MPs and senators who toiled diligently on the medically assisted death file only to see the thrust of their report ignored by the government, this committee could amount to little more than a make-work project designed to allow the Liberals to check an item off their bucket list.

There has for a long time been an implicit convention that in matters that pertain to the elections law, governments should strive to secure a consensus that extends beyond their own ranks.

Yes, the Conservatives broke that convention when they last overhauled the election law. But the Liberals promised to do better. Their actions on the electoral reform front so far fall short of that commitment.

Where legitimacy should have been striven for, opposition suspicions that the Liberals want to use this process to either give their party a permanent electoral edge or more simply to sabotage it have instead been reinforced.

It is an open secret that more than a few Liberals would not be unhappy to see the entire electoral plan founder — as long as they could blame someone else for it.

Looking at how Trudeau has stacked the electoral reform deck, a cynic could conclude that his bid to move to a different voting system is programmed to fail if not in the Liberal-controlled House of Commons, then in a Senate conveniently once-removed from the government.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

Postal banking would deliver needed services

Linda McQuaig

For those with a yacht or a Porsche, banks are warm, welcoming places. But banks are considerably less hospitable to those needing services other than "wealth management."

Indeed, for hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have no wealth to manage, banks are increasingly inaccessible places.

Canada's six big banks have shut down more than 1,700 branches in recent years.

This has left hundreds of thousands of Canadians without bank accounts, including many low-income city-dwellers — notably young people with poor credit ratings and lack of identification — who now rely on pay-day loan companies charging annualized interest rates well above 300 per cent.

All this suggests there's a compelling case for Canada Post to offer banking to the public — as it did for decades until 1968. The possibility of reviving "postal banking" will be considered as part of a sweeping review of Canada Post, announced by the federal government last week.

What makes the idea of postal banking compelling is that offering financial services, even without gouging, is a lucrative business.

So it's not surprising that, as recently as two years ago, senior executives inside Canada Post considered restoring postal banking "a win-win" situation: it would provide banking services for underserved Canadians and earn significant revenue for the post office that could subsidize mail delivery.

Their support for postal banking was based on years of research that they'd compiled in an 800-page internal file, including polling data from across Canada and evidence from around the world.

But the idea ran into a major roadblock — the fierce objections of Stephen Harper's Conservatives. After all, postal banking would be public, and the Harperites were hell-bent on shrinking government.

The Harper cabinet came up with a lose-lose strategy for the post office: dramatic increases in the cost of stamps and the elimination of home delivery.

While the Liberal government's review of Canada Post is focused on the issue of reinstating home delivery, the prospect of turning post offices into a public banking system may be the more far-reaching and intriguing idea. If post offices offered a range of banking services, the big banks might be forced to compete.

And banks' lobbying to avoid competition may explain why postal banking wasn't as developed in Canada as elsewhere, such as the U.K.

Even if the panel recommends postal banking, the idea could still face heavy headwinds from some of the country's wealthiest, who have never been shy about protecting their turf.

Linda McQuaig's column appears monthly in the Toronto Star.

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Your essential daily news

Instagram announces new design and new icon for the app

It's OK to be a nervous weirdo

HOT DOG TASTE TEST

Lisa Hanawalt's confessional comics a peek into her anxiety

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

When cartoonist Lisa Hanawalt was a kid, she took riding lessons, which turned her already fanatical love of horses into a lifelong obsession. "It was something I glommed onto and couldn't shake it," she says. "I tried to."

Hanawalt's equine friends pop up throughout all her work, most famously in the characters she designed for Netflix's first animated series, the cult-favourite BoJack Horseman, starring Will Arnett as the voice of a boozy, has-been sitcom star. Her new comics collection, Hot Dog Taste Test, published by Drawn & Quarterly, gathers many of Hanawalt's favourite things — anthropomorphized creatures with often gross human foibles and desires, food diaries and lists, interspersed with just the right amount of scatological humour. Many of the illustrated stories first appeared in David Chang's trendy food-culture magazine, Lucky Peach, including her first-hand account of shadowing chef Wylie Dufresne for a day (referring to the tasty stuffing inside his ravioli dish as "sex cheese"), for which the Los Angeles-based artist won a James Beard Award.

Unlike horses, food was not an obsession for young Hanawalt. A self-described finicky eater who preferred plain mashed potatoes, she is now a fearless connoisseur, willing to try anything from spicy pigeon to viscachas, a pickled rodent meat she purchased in jars while visiting Argentina. Food as a theme gives Hanawalt plenty of material, too. "I can really explore the outer edges of what is even tangentially related to food because it's such an important aspect of life," she says. "Sleep, work, food, sex. It gives me a lot of room to play."

Hanawalt, who is a special guest at this weekend's Toronto Comic Arts Festival, is one of those gifted creative types who can write and draw equally well, and has a seemingly endless fount of productive energy, although she says she often goes to bed feeling like she hasn't accomplished enough. (She also hosts a popular podcast, Baby Geniuses, with her friend, comedian Emily Heller.)

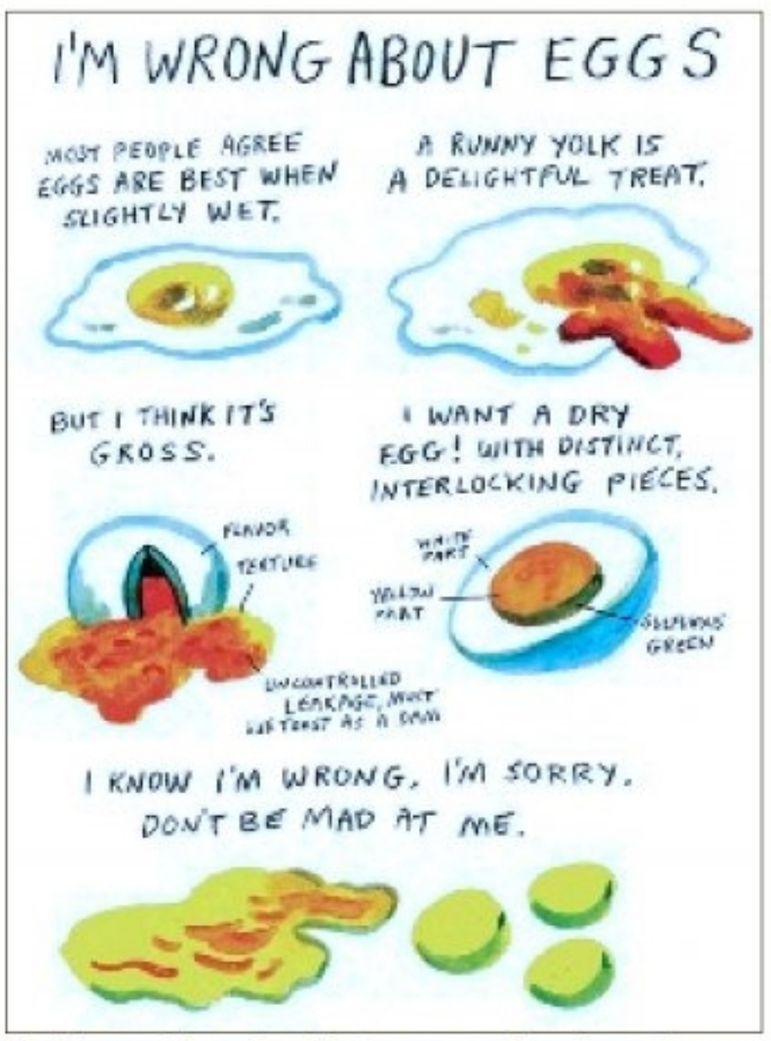
Her work often starts with ideas she's jotted down or with some absentminded doodles from her sketchbook. She claims that she can take on an impulsive "manic persona" when she's drawing.

"It's like a wild person," she says with a laugh.

While there are no shortage of sly gags, Hot Dog Taste Test also features several sentimental stories, with Hanawalt confessing anxieties over family matters, travel fears, social relations — often times told through the voices of her wildlife characters. While Hanawalt enjoys reading confessional, diary comics, she's never been comfortable making them, and so it forces her to try to understand why she needs to share certain feelings with the world.

"Maybe it's that I just want to reach out to the reader and say, Hey, are you like a nervous weirdo, too? It's OK, we'll get through this. It's OK to have these thoughts and feel uncomfortable. And it's me telling myself that, too."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.



Lisa Hanawalt's new book features several sentimental stories that reveal her anxieties. CONTRIBUTED

GOSSIP

Barry Avrich dishes up dirt in Hollywood memoir

Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein has done adman-turned-filmmaker Barry Avrich a huge favour.

When Avrich's new memoir, Moguls, Monsters and Madmen, came out this month, Weinstein (one of Hollywood's most powerful men as co-chair of the Weinstein Company and former head of Miramax Films), issued a statement decrying one of the anecdotes in the book.

"Since Harvey made the statement, I've done 30 interviews and the story has gone from London to Kabul because Harvey is big news. It's amazing," Avrich said.

(Weinstein specifically objected to a story about his instructions regarding a sex scene in the film, Factory Girl.)

Part of the book chronicles the various obstacles Weinstein threw in Avrich's path on the way to making a film about the movie mogul, including warning people not to talk.

The 2011 film is aptly titled Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project.

"He (Weinstein) has shone a light on Unauthorized, which never got seen in the U.S., and hopefully created a demand for the film and hopefully, for the book," Avrich added.

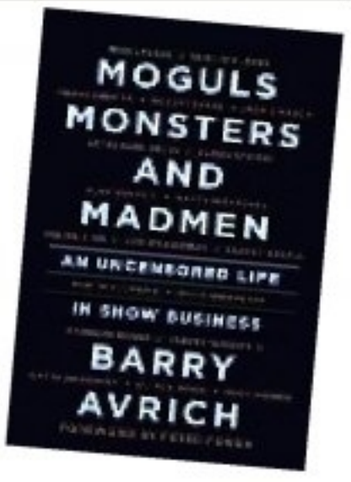
While the film was seen "intact and beautifully unedited" when it was shown in Canada, the U.S. rights were bought by a company called IFC Films, which made major edits and ensured through a lacklustre distribution effort that it went largely unseen by audiences there. Avrich noted IFC Films and Weinstein had a "long relationship."

"I believe that Harvey was, at the end of the day, impressed that I got the film made," Avrich said, adding that Weinstein still returns his emails promptly and even gave him advance warning he planned to issue a statement.

Avrich has tackled other subjects for films who were also strongly opposed, including disgraced former theatrical and film producer Garth Drabinsky, and late Hollywood talent agent and studio executive Lew Wasserman.

Others like concert promoter Michael Cohl and late criminal attorney Eddie Greenspan were more amenable, though comedian-turned-director David Steinberg proved to be difficult.

"I start off the exercise for a film that is about somebody that I've always wanted to meet, that's number one. Number two, it's (got) to have some commercial value because I'm not interested in making a film about the gestation period of a beaver that five people are going to see," Avrich said. "Thirdly, I want my films to be provocative and sometimes it's about somebody that is scandalous, somebody that has had that larger than life career and quite often, it's about people that don't want the publicity," he said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



The trouble with capitalism

RICH AND POOR

New novel is a parable of corporate culture

Melita Kuburas
Metro | Canada

"My spare room funds my expeditions," states an outdoor adventurer named Jeff in a new Airbnb billboard near the foot of Yonge Street in Toronto. It's part of the company's first major ad campaign in Canada as so-called disruptive American businesses gain a foothold here.

While the sharing economy is praised by self-described hustlers for allowing us all to become entrepreneurs, author Jacob Wren sees it as a troubling form of "turbo capitalism," forcing us to monetize all aspects of our lives — our homes, cars, and friendships.

"You used to just be able to live in your home but now you have to rent it out every time you leave in order to survive," says Wren, 44, who lives in Montreal.

Wren's new novel, Rich and Poor (Bookthug, $20), is more than a critique of capitalism and profit-obsessed society.

It's a parable examining corporate culture — the way it makes us calculating, unscrupulous and ultimately disposable. Even the billionaire executive realizes "no matter how talented, qualified or indispensable I think I might be, there's always someone else who can do the job."

Inspired by the discourse started by the Occupy movement, Wren says he's intrigued by the discussion caused by the popular protest, and more recently the Panama Papers.

"I remember before Occupy talking to some not particularly 'left' friends, and them all saying shut up about capitalism, no one talks about that anymore," says Wren.

"As Occupy was bringing questions of wealth and inequality into the public and creating new terms like The One Per Cent, suddenly the same people were willing to talk about capitalism and think about what it is and think about how much money is actually being hoarded in offshore accounts."

Wren says these are important issues for his generation, which is said to have less money and fewer opportunities than their parents.

The two main narrators are only known to the reader as No. 1 — the billionaire — and No. 2, a talented pianist who now washes dishes for a living.

No. 2 seeks revenge for the way life has betrayed him, and so he decides that "The poor must kill the rich, one at a time, at every opportunity." He wants to strangle No. 1 with piano wire, and set an example for others to imitate.

Wren read popular business books and CEO biographies to help develop character No. 1, a brilliant executive who memorizes all his employees names and is unusually candid about his company's misconduct.

He says it was a pleasure to write from this perspective, though he admits the mashup is not going to be recognizable as any single person, either living or in popular culture.

"I don't think any actual capitalist will think I've gotten them right," says Wren. "It's a very biased, playful mischievous take on that kind of character, and that kind of larger-than-life figure who rejoices in being a capitalist and also is willing to admit all the problems of it," he says.

In many ways, Rich and Poor is a parody of the typical capitalist villain, says Wren.

For instance, No. 1 considers finding another "trophy wife" but at his age decides it's in bad taste, instead opting for a prostitute because he sees a "pure economic transaction" as "the most clean, the most precise, method for fulfilling desires and needs."

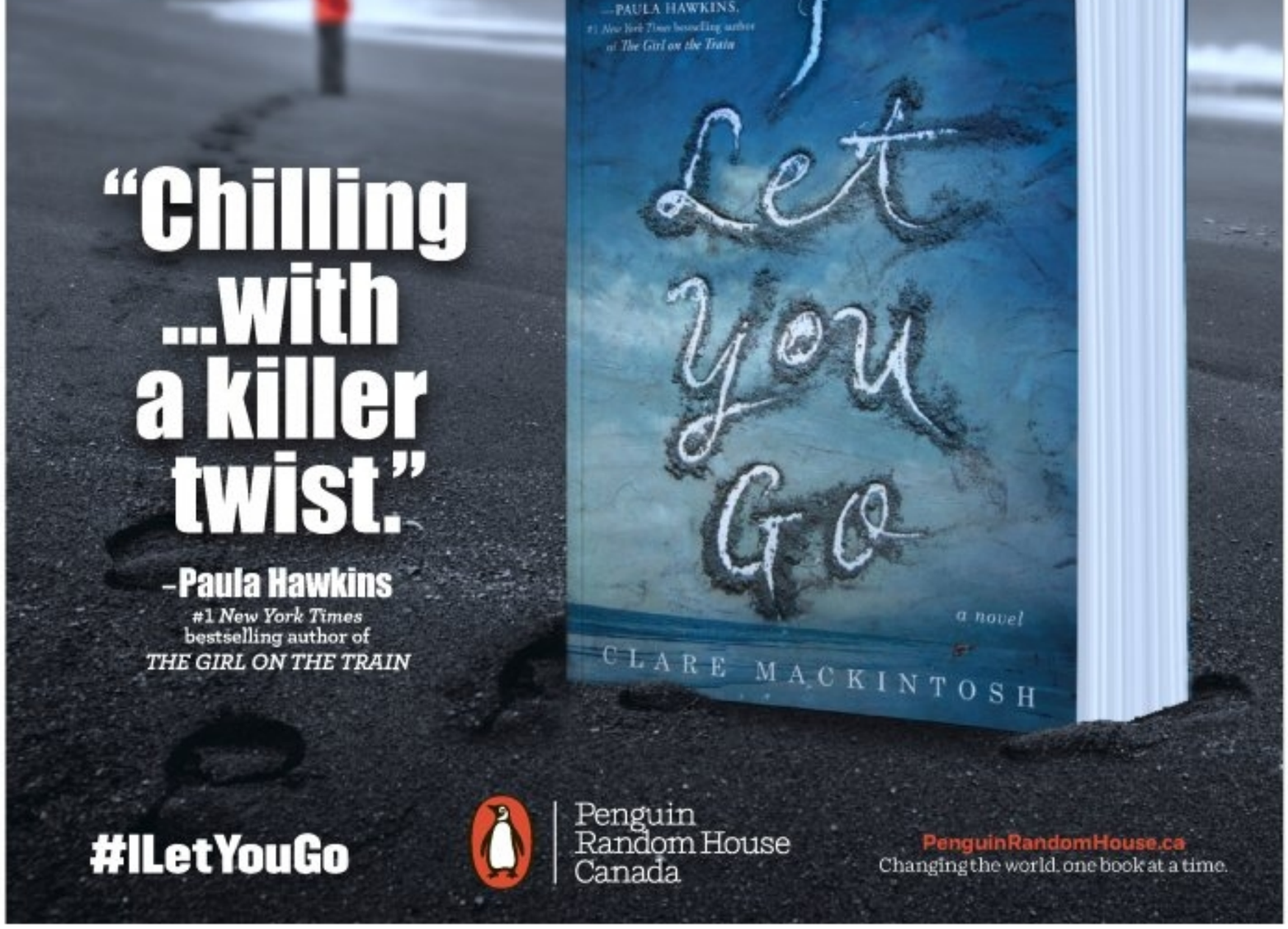
If there's commonality between the two narrators, it's in the way both seem unable to maintain relationships and their dysfunctional view on friendship.

No. 2 defines a friend as someone who can "betray you more savagely, more painfully, than anyone else in the world." For this reason, he seeks imitators, not friends.

Meanwhile, No. 1 stabs his best friend in the back to save himself.

"We could say this is kind of the ultimate capitalist manoeuver — to keep your wealth by betraying those closest to you," says Wren.

Jacob Wren, 44, author of Rich and Poor. CONTRIBUTED



Veep remains one of the fleetest, funniest half-hours on TV, says Schneller. CONTRIBUTED

JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Harsh humour is prominent

THE SHOW: Veep, S5, E4 (HBO)
THE MOMENT: The dying mother

U.S. President Selina Meyer (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) and her staff crowd into a hospital room. Selina is about to switch off life support for her mother (whom we never see), and is also awaiting news from her election recount. It's chaos. The beeping of the medical equipment keeps everyone checking their phones. Selina's aide Gary (Tony Hale) collapses into a wheelchair.

"Ignore Steven Hawking over there," Selina says to a doctor.

Selina's mother dies just as the staff receives good news from the recount. Selina's daughter Catherine (Sarah Sutherland), who was getting coffee, enters to find everyone cheering.

"Is Grandma better?" Catherine asks.

"Catherine! I thought you were here," Selina says. "Grandma's dead. But we got great news about the election!"

Is it me, or is this show meaner now that its creator, Armando Iannucci, has departed, replaced by Seinfeld/Curb Your Enthusiasm vet David Mandel?

Iannucci is an unparalleled master of insults – if you haven't seen his film In the Loop or series The Thick of It, please do. But he's also British, which I posit gives him a refined sense of the workplace class system.

In earlier seasons, Selina's staff ragged on each other, but they also knew their place in the pecking order.

The insults had a subtle variety. Now they feel of the same voice and intensity. Selina's abject disdain for Catherine, especially, is much harsher. It used to be tempered with guilt, which was more nuanced.

This is a quibble. Veep remains one of the fleetest, funniest half-hours on TV. But we were lucky to have Iannucci as long as we did.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Don't expect a change of script from Allen yet

FILM

May-December romance trope unlikely to see a gender switch

Woody Allen says he'll make a movie about a younger man falling in love with an older woman, rather than his usual habit of the other way around, if he ever comes up with a "good idea" for one.

But the 80-year-old writer/director held out no hope of that happening anytime soon, as he met international press at the Cannes Film Festival following Wednesday's gala world premiere of Café Society.

The film is his 46th feature as a director and his third to open the festival.

It stars Kristen Stewart, 26, as a Hollywood beauty of the 1930s who falls for a high-powered Hollywood agent played by Steve Carell, 53.

The film's plot turns have Stewart's character falling in love at the same time with a character played by Jesse Eisenberg, 32, in an offering viewed by most critics here as a fair-to-middling Allen effort.

> **I wouldn't hesitate to do that if I had a good idea.**
> Woody Allen, on if he'd ever make a film with a woman as the older romantic partner to a younger man

Café Society is yet another Woody Allen movie where a significantly younger woman falls for an older man, something that happened in his 2015 Cannes debut Irrational Man and also in real life for him.

Allen is married to 45-year-old Soon-Yi Previn, whom Allen used to call his adopted step-daughter (with ex-partner Mia Farrow) before he and Previn caused a scandal by marrying in 1997.

A British journalist asked Allen if he ever considered shaking up his familiar story line by making a woman the older romantic partner to a younger male.

"I wouldn't hesitate to do that if I had a good idea," Allen responded, at a press conference where he was flanked by Café Society actors Stewart and Eisenberg, along with fellow cast members Blake Lively and Corey Stoll plus cinematographer Vittorio Storaro. (Steve Carell isn't in Cannes, likely due to the death of his mother this past weekend.)

But it's ill advised to hold your breath waiting for a gender-switching May-December romance film from the director.

"It's not a commonly seen thing and I don't have a lot of experience to draw on for material," Allen said — although he added that when he was 30, he "had a crush" on a married woman in her 50s.

Blake Lively, director Woody Allen and Kristen Stewart attend the Cafe Society premiere during The 69th Annual Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

Nothing came of the infatuation, he said.

The discussion was the closest Allen came to addressing a potential elephant in the room, one dropped in Wednesday's Cannes edition of The Hollywood Reporter.

The trade magazine carried a guest column from Ronan Farrow, Allen's estranged adult son. The column took the journal to task for its recent cover story on Allen, which didn't delve into long-simmering allegations of sexual abuse by Allen against Farrow's sister Dylan, when she was a young girl.

No charges were ever filed against Allen, who has strenuously denied the abuse claims, but Ronan Farrow contends in his THR soapbox that journalists are honour-bound to pursue the matter.

A judge in the child custody case between Allen and Mia Farrow described Allen's behaviour towards Dylan as "grossly inappropriate and that measures must be taken to protect her."

But the issue never came up at the brief press conference, which started 10 minutes late and wrapped up after only a handful of questions from the press.

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PANAMA PAPERS

Emma Watson had offshore company, representative says

A representative for Harry Potter actress Emma Watson said she had an offshore company for privacy reasons only.

The company, Falling Leaves Ltd., was named in the so-called Panama Papers, a series of leaked documents that revealed how some politicians and celebrities hide money.

More files were made available this week by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

Watson created the company in the British Virgin Islands three years ago "for the sole purpose of protecting her anonymity and safety," the representative said.

"UK companies are required to publicly publish details of their shareholders and therefore do not give her the necessary anonymity required to protect her personal safety."

Watson's company was used only for privacy reasons, a representative claims. CONTRIBUTED

The spokesman said Watson received no monetary advantages from the offshore company.

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Oki Sato's design firm presented a movement-themed collection in New York

Making the complex simpler

INTERVIEW

RESCON's goal to unite homebuilders

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario, also known as RESCON, is an organization that brings together highrise and lowrise homebuilders under one banner.

The association offers a voice to government in such diverse subjects as building innovation, human resources, health and safety, technical standards, and training and education.

RESCON president Richard Lyall says that on the international scene, Canada is a respected leader for constructing tall buildings, especially for residential projects.

"Highrise buildings are becoming more complex to build over time," he says. "They are actually very sophisticated built-forms. With the progression of the building code and other changes, we decided that it was time that we needed to engage on a more sophisticated level with respect to building science and building innovation."

RESCON has recently partnered with the University of Toronto and the federal government to create The Building Tall Research Centre, a new think tank catering to the highrise industry.

Brenda McCabe is the centre's research director and associate professor at UofT's Department of Civil Engineering.

The centre provides a go-to resource for designers, consultants, developers, builders and policymakers. RESCON acts in a funding and advisory role and Lyall sits on the board, as well as representatives from Daniels and Menkes, two major Toronto condo builders.

With regard to the skyrocketing GTA housing prices, Lyall says we are experiencing a supply-side economics problem in the central Ontario area that's particularly hard on young families and first-time buyers.

"Fundamentally, we're not actually building enough housing to meet supply." he explains.

The new building trend towards green condo standards and LEED certification is a good thing, and Lyall believes that green building regulations should be mandated on a performance level, allowing builders to meet certain environmental goals.

A Tridel highrise construction project is shown under construction. Canada is a respected leader for constructing tall buildings, especially for residential projects, says RESCON President Richard Lyall. TRIDEL

Fundamentally, we're not actually building enough housing to meet supply

RESCON President Richard Lyall

"In terms of long-term goals, we should have buildings that are basically self-sufficient," explains Lyall. "but you have to balance that out with the fact that we have a huge housing affordability problem." RESCON has always been a champion of housing affordability.

Lyall sees the need for more density in neighbourhoods along public transit routes like the Danforth subway line and Eglinton Crosstown. "Where's the massive, creative, city-building change that says along these major transportation corridors here are the new rules for building?"

EVENTS

What's hot this week in the city's real estate market

1 OPEN HOUSE

Waterfront: This one-plus-one bedroom suite with two bathrooms is being shown at the new Pier 27 condos right on the lake. Visit 29 Queens Quay Ave. E., on May 14 and 15 from 1 to 4 p.m.

CONTACT: ANDREW IPEKIAN, KELLER WILLIAMS REFERRED URBAN REALTY, BROKERAGE. 416-572-1016

2 GRAND OPENING

Brampton: The Olivia Marie Gardens condominiums go on sale this weekend in Brampton. Visit the sales centre at the northeast corner of Mississauga Road and Olivia Marie Road, on May 14 at 9 a.m.

CONTACT: 905-874-8880, OMGDANIELS.COM

3 OPEN HOUSE

Etobicoke: A fabulous one-plus-one bedroom suite at Waterscapes condos will be shown this weekend. Check it out at 80 Marine Parade Dr., May 14 and 15 from 2 to 4 p.m.

CONTACT: BETTE URSINI, RE/MAX CONDOS PLUS CORP., BROKERAGE., 416-847-0920

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IN THE VILLAGE

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MEET THE CONDO

Large suites and boutique design

Brookdale on Avenue Road

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

Brookdale is a boutique midrise condominium with a newly-designed selection of large suites to accommodate those seeking a larger home with the convenience of condo living. Some of the terraces are as large as townhome backyards.

Building amenities

Residents can enjoy a private dining room, an outdoor terrace and a lounge with bar. There's also a fitness centre by Movement Haus. Each residence has access to its own terrace or balcony.

In the neighbourhood

Avenue Road offers a host of restaurants, shops and services. There's Brunos, La Bamboche cafe, Pusateris, La Cascina Ristorante and an LCBO. Nearby is Brookdale Park, daycare and several good schools.

Location and transit

Located on Avenue Road just north of Lawrence Avenue West, the building is close to several TTC bus routes. Motorists can catch the nearby Highway 401 or the Allen Expressway.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

What: Brookdale on Avenue Road
Builder: Cityzen Development, Fernbrook Homes, Fortress Real Properties
Architect: RAW Design, Bigauskas and Associates
Designer: Union 31
Location: 1700 Avenue Rd.
Building: Over seven storeys with 62 suites
Sizes: 1,145 to 2,420 sq. ft.
Pricing: Suites from $1,000,000
Suites: Two bedroom, two bedroom plus den, three bedroom, and three, two-storey townhomes
Status: Preconstruction phase
Sales centre: 1717 Avenue Rd.
Info: Monday to Thursday, 12 to 5 p.m. Weekends, 12 to 5 p.m. Fridays closed
Phone: 416-785-9009
Website: brookdaleonavenue.com
Email: bec@brookdaleonavenue.com

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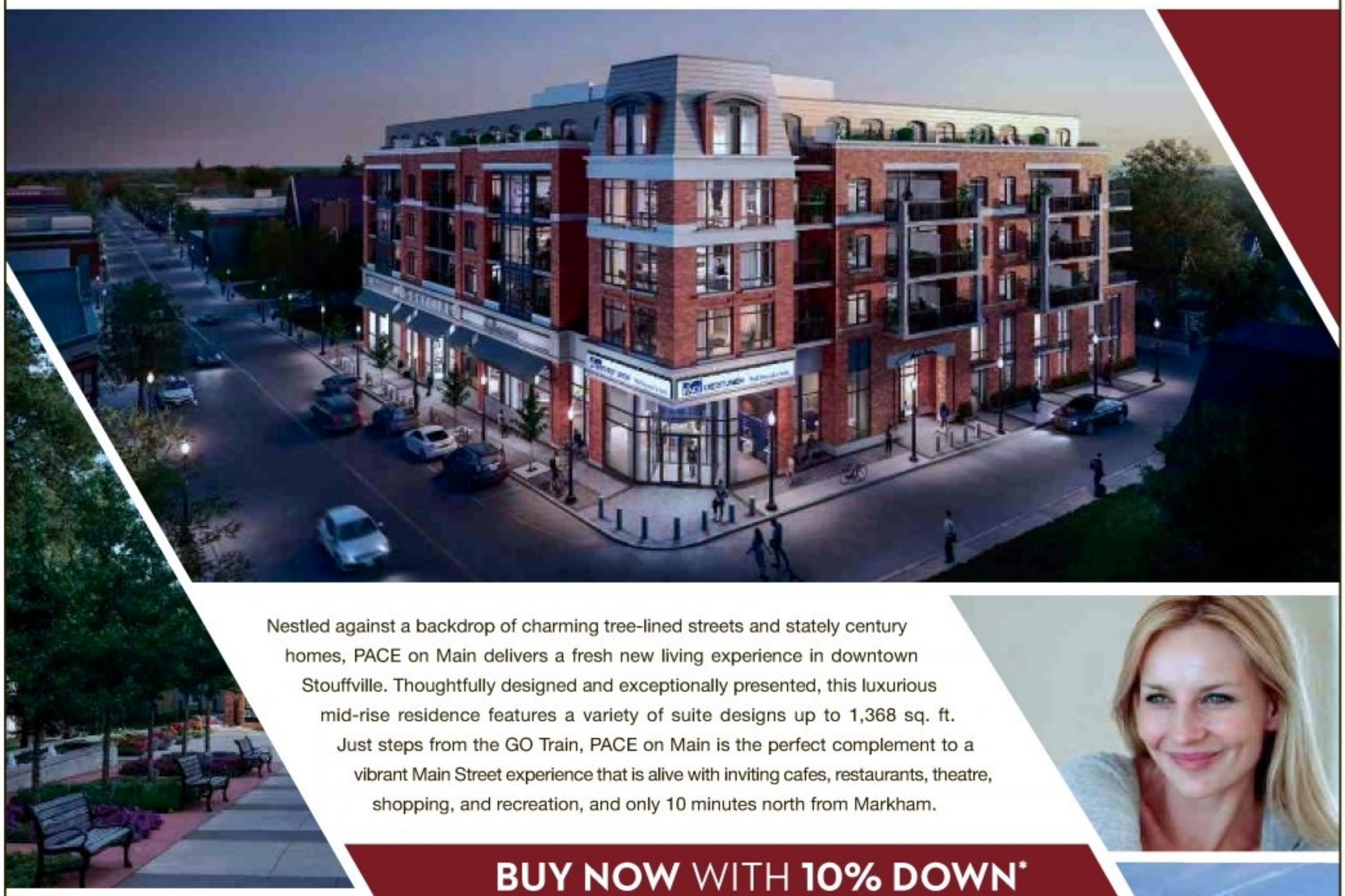

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LEGAL MATTERS

Addressing issues when 'horse is out of the barn'

Jeffrey Cowan
For Metro Canada

Q:I just purchased my first property which is a century home in an up-and-coming neighbourhood.

We closed without any glitches but when I retrieved the keys from our lawyer and went to the house, we found there were a number of larger old furniture items still in the house. Our lawyer wrote the solicitor for the vendor but received no positive response. Now we are burdened with disposing of the large furniture items and little hope of getting any compensation for this problem. What is my recourse?

A: Once the "horse is out of the barn" it is sometimes too late to address a problem such as this. In virtually all transactions, the vendor is supposed to leave the property in broom-swept condition and provide vacant possession. This means that those large pieces of furniture should have been removed. However, they were not and if the vendor's lawyer doesn't respond to your lawyer's queries you have little recourse (aside from small claims court).

Here are two positive moves to the transaction which could have been more proactive: If you think the home and owner appear to be the type to leave items behind (messy, cluttered home) you can arrange for an inspection of the property the morning of closing.

If the items are still left behind, you can contact your lawyer directly and they can halt the transaction or at least proceed with a holdback in order to pay for the removal of the leftover items.

Chasing a vendor's unreliable pocketbook is not an enviable position to be in, especially in your first home.

Get advice before starting you reno

Bryan Tuckey
For Metro Canada

For many people when it's time to sell a home or buy another one, that's when a conversation about renovating begins.

In many cases these conversations are between homeowners and realtors, which is why a panel of RenoMark renovators recently spoke at the Toronto Real Estate Board's annual conference and gave a large group of real estate professionals some helpful tips.

Engaging a professional renovator early as part of the home sale or purchase decision was a key piece of advice because it will help to understand how long it can take to get the appropriate approvals and plans in place to renovate, as well as a realistic budget.

Realtors can help to find a professional renovator or there are resources for homeowners like RenoMark.

RenoMark is a program that was started by BILD in 2001 so consumers could identify professional renovators and trade contractors. There is a website with a searchable database that allows consumers to find reputable renovators who specialize in certain project types and work nearby.

The program has been endorsed across the nation and here in the GTA there are more than 250 renovators and trade contractors in it.

Engage a professional renovator early in your project to avoid issues later. ISTOCK

As part of the program, they must abide a renovation-specific Code of Conduct that includes providing a written contract, carrying applicable licenses, obtaining permits and government approvals, as well as having a minimum of $2 million liability insurance and offering a minimum two-year warranty on all work and more.

A hot topic in renovating real estate in the GTA is flipping, which is buying a fixer-upper and selling it for profit.

The old adage of location, location, location still applies, but our renovators also say that it's a good idea to work with a professional contractor and carefully consider government rules and regulations that could affect the project timeline and budget.

Real estate in the GTA is a good investment, but it's not one to be made without doing some homework first and engaging a team of professionals to help you get the best return.

BRYAN TUCKEY IS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AND A LAND-USE PLANNER WHO HAS WORKED FOR MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. FOLLOW HIM ON TWITTER @BILDGTA, FACEBOOK.COM/BILDGTA, AND BILDBLOGS.CA.

Learning to live in aesthetic harmony

A iving room designed by Betsy Burnham of Burnham Design shows a couple's contrasting tastes both represented: Sleek, modern furniture and lighting mix beautifully with soft floral drapes and colourful, patterned pillows. JOHN HUGSTAD/BURNHAM DESIGN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DESIGN

When moving in together, couples learn to compromise

For couples setting up a new home together, it's a challenge: how to merge two sets of stuff and two decorating styles into one space they both can love.

"Emotions get really high when it comes to your belongings if the person you're choosing to spend the rest of your life with doesn't love what you love," says stylist Marianne Canada, host of the HGTV Crafternoon web series.

In our increasingly design-savvy world, many people come to coupledom with a clear idea of how their home should look. Even when couples try to accommodate conflicting tastes, they run into the space issue.

"Most of us just don't have room for two full households together," Canada says. "You have to make some choices."

Here, Canada and two other interior designers — California-based Betsy Burnham and Florida-based Laura Burleson — offer advice on mixing, matching and peacefully negotiating a merger of two homes.

Claim your favourites

Each person probably has a few treasured pieces of furniture or art that they can't imagine living without. Burnham suggests that partners agree to each keep perhaps three or four of these pieces in their shared home. If one partner truly dislikes one of the other's absolute favourites, consider changing the piece a little through painting or re-upholstering.

Burleson cites one couple who disagreed over a set of cane-backed dining chairs. The solution: lacquering the chairs in a dramatic shade of charcoal grey that matched a modern, concrete and brass dining table.

"It takes repurposing things like that for people to look at them in a new way," Burleson says. "It's such a great exercise as a first compromise. And we all know marriage is based on compromise."

Go with the contrast

Once those favourite pieces are chosen, Burnham suggests creating a clean slate by painting the walls a crisp white or a white shade with just a hint of colour. Then look at all the remaining furniture against this new backdrop as though you were shopping.

Rather than trying to group items that are similar, experiment with pairing those that contrast. All three designers say contrast can be the best part of decor. In fact, couples merging two households "have such a leg up, design-wise," says Burleson, because they can creatively mix and layer a wide range of decor into one stylish space.

"There are no two styles that can't be combined to some degree," says Canada. And doing so can result in decor "that feels more collected and intentional."

Try new locations

As you assess your remaining furniture and accessories, consider placing things in rooms where they've never been.

"You don't have to make that big leather recliner work in your traditional living room," Canada says, even if that's where it's always been. What about using it in your bedroom for late-night reading?

Small dressers can serve as end tables or sideboards, while end tables can be used as bedside tables. Living room seating can make a guest room cozier, while a small kitchen table can add extra dining space to a family room.

Shop together

Buying a few new pieces can tie together a couple's shared decor and help both partners feel at home. "Maybe they go shopping," Burnham says, "and they find some great vintage rugs that neither one of them knew they loved."

This includes accessories and artwork: Canada suggests buying one powerful piece of art to be a focal point in your newly shared space.

And if they really can't reach agreement, Canada says, "There's no shame in selling your furniture and going out together and buying new pieces as a couple."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EYES UP RAISING THE CEILING CAN REALLY CHANGE A ROOM

So many North American homes are built with flat and noticeably low eight- or nine-foot ceilings. Some homeowners are opting to change that, extending their ceilings all the way up to the roof. It's a big project, but it can powerfully change the look and feel of a home. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Architects tend to look skyward: The ancient Greeks built coffered ceilings in their temples. Romans introduced the barrel vault. Medieval builders constructed Gothic arches and Renaissance domes to inspire the masses.

American builders in the early and mid-20th century did embrace flat ceilings.

Frank Lloyd Wright would manipulate the impact of a flat ceiling by designing it lower near a room's entrance. "So when you came in the room and he popped it up, you felt that you'd arrived somewhere," says Lichten, founder of the architecture and design firm Lichten Craig.

Trouble is, many other midcentury home-builders didn't get Wright's message.

Piggyback on other construction

If you're already doing heavy remodeling — perhaps removing walls to open up a kitchen and dining room — consider raising the ceiling in those rooms, suggests Chip Wade, contractor and host of HGTV's Elbow Room and Curb Appeal: The Block. The expense and challenge of redistributing the roof's load can be shared by both projects.

If you're not making any other changes, then raising a ceiling is an expensive choice, similar to putting an addition on your house, says Scott McGillivray of the DIY Network series Income Property.

Yet it can be worth the investment.

"It changes the feel of the whole space," McGillivray says, so there's no harm in getting estimates and considering the project.

A renovated home once with ceilings barely 8 feet high were raised as shown to create a dramatic open space. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Every home is different

Get estimates from engineers or architects who can think creatively about your particular home, says Wade.

"It needs to be someone who can see the engineering side first" and will consider more than one approach, Wade says.

Raising the ceiling of an older, pre-1950s home can be simpler than doing so on a newer home, says McGillivray, because older houses were often built with rafters rather than prefab trusses. Exposing rafters doesn't change the structure of the roof, so it's a smaller job.

Removing modern trusses and rebuilding the roof's support is a larger project, usually involving the addition of a huge centre beam running the length of the room.

Older, Victorian-style houses are likely to have a very pitched roof, adding considerable height to a room. So you can raise the ceiling to a game-changing height by exposing those vintage rafters.

Other ceiling options

If raising your ceiling is too expensive, consider easy, decorative fixes like metallic ceiling tiles and coffered panels.

You can make the most of a decorative ceiling through "vertical tricks," says Lichten. Try installing paneling vertically up to the ceiling, or adding tall, vertical windows to create the illusion of height.

Or try making the ceiling artificially lower at the entrance by adding a few inches of soffit above the doorway.

"There's a basic human need to feel this vertical force in a room," Lichten says. "So anything you can do to bring the eye upward, to bring it skyward helps."

IMAGINE QUICKER COMMUTES.

Waiting for crowded subways is just going to get worse where more and more condos are built. But living close to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT will make getting around easier. There's a smarter alternative starting from the $200's.

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All illustrations and renderings are artist's concept. Elevations and streetscape sourced from City of Toronto 'Eglinton Connects Land Use' document and www.thecrosstown.ca. The details shown above are proposed only and may change without notice. E.&.O.E. April 20, 2016.

Adding a tropical punch this season

Furnishings and accessories made of tropical plant and tree fibers started to appear in the fall, in modern vintage and midcentury pieces. That trend has expanded for spring and summer to wall coverings, textiles and rugs printed with imagery drawn from the jungle, beach and rainforest. TEXT AND IMAGES BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1 Prints and soft touches

A palm-printed pillow can freshen a sofa or chair. You'll find a collection of throw pillows and shower curtains with big, bold palm-leaf prints at H&M Home. "There can be an element of late '70s/early '80s kitsch to it," says Joss & Main's style director Donna Garlough. "I recently watched a rerun of 'Golden Girls' and laughed my head off over all the tropical elements on that set that have come back into vogue, from the rattan furniture to the macrame plant hangers. Blanche even had that famous palm wallpaper in her bedroom."

Playful toucans peek out from behind bamboo branches on a whimsical, tropical print throw pillow from H & M Home. A vintage style palm leaf print graces a chic throw pillow from H&M Home. handm.com

2 Texture

Add a few inexpensive rattan pieces to your home. The textures contrast nicely with contemporary furniture's trim lines, and bring homey charm to more bohemian spaces. Rattan also works as a foil for both bright and neutral hues.

Seagrass fibers are woven together to create a smart little ottoman as shown. The textural piece adds a touch of the tropics to spring and summer decor. dotandbo.com

3 Playful

Overstock.com has Tommy Bahama's Tropical Hibiscus throw pillow and a chic white pineapple table lamp. Flamingo-printed sheets bring the theme into the bedroom, and the pink bird struts across a preppy-striped rug.

A pink flamingo struts across a preppy striped rug shown here from Overstock.

Bedding with a fun flamingo print is shown and is an easy way to introduce tropical decor.

A white ceramic pineapple lamp, shown, is a chic accessory that brings a touch of the tropics into a space. Overstock.com

BASEMENT FLOODS ARE ON THE RISE.

DON'T LET YOUR BASEMENT BE NEXT.

Together we can stop heavy rainfall, melting snow and runoff from ending up in your basement. At the City, we're doing our part by continually updating and maintaining Toronto's complex underground pipes, sewers and catch basins. Now it's your turn. Here are some tips to help you flood-proof your home.

Fix cracks in your foundation.

Ensure the ground slopes away from your house.

Clear debris from eavestroughs and downspouts.

Install a sump pump to remove excess water.

Install a backwater valve to prevent water and sewage from backing up.

Divert your downspouts away from the foundation.

For more information on flood-proofing your home, go to **toronto.ca/basementflooding**

TORONTO Call 311 Livegreen Toronto

Planting a garden to Bee the change

BOOK

Apartment or condo living doesn't mean you can't help

Just as citizens created victory gardens for food during the world wars, we need to plant pollen- and nectar-rich gardens to save the bees. That's the message Lori Weidenhammer lays out in Victory Gardens for Bees. Weidenhammer, a bee expert and garden educator in Vancouver, spoke to the Star about the bee-benefits of lavender, goldenrod and rotting stumps.

How much is the bee population declining? What are the causes?
There are two sides to the crisis. The honeybees, introduced by Europeans, are suffering from Colony Collapse Disorder (the loss of hives due to pesticides, mites and other causes).

There are also 800 species of native bees in Canada and they're fantastic pollinators but have undergone a huge population crash. Some bumblebees common 20 years ago are almost extinct. The main problem is habitat loss. Both honeybees and native bees need millions of flowers. But they need the right kind, which is why I wrote the book. It's sort of a Canada Food Guide for Bees. Native bees need nesting habitat and a lot of rural land has been developed. Pesticides are also a huge problem, especially neonics. And global warming is implicated.

Why should we be troubled?
We all eat. About one out of every three mouthfuls of food has been pollinated by bees. A lot of the colourful, healthy foods are bee-pollinated.

A garden to lure bees may be a hard sell. People are afraid of getting stung.
Honeybees and bumblebees sting. People need to learn some safety tips. Most bees, however, don't sting. A bee garden is going to attract more bees that don't sting than do. Most people get stung by wasps and blame bees.

What makes a good bee plant?
One that has both nectar and pollen. Bees and flowers evolved together, so it depends on the type of bee. For instance, a long-tongued bumblebee needs a flower with a long nectary, such as scarlet bee balm, so the tongue can go down to sip the nectar. The most common colours attractive to bees are blue, purple and yellow. A lot of white flowers have purple spots that are nectar guides.

Examples of ideal plants?
Lavender, rosemary, thyme — herbs with scent — are like magnets drawing bees into the garden. Lavender has essential oils that help protect bees against mites. Sunflowers are like a buffet for bees, with many feeding together. Roses — not the tight tea roses but the blousey dog roses and wild roses — are awesome. The scent draws them in and they swim in the copious amounts of nectar and pollen.

In southern Ontario, which bees are the most endangered?
The oil-collecting bee is a rare one living in Ontario. It feeds on the loosestrife flower in the primrose family.

For a small Toronto yard or balcony, what plants welcome bees?
Try three pots of different types of lavender that bloom at different times. Oregano is also one of the best because it's long blooming and has tons of nectar. If you can go vertical, I'm a huge fan of scarlet runner beans, one of the few beans that feed bees. You can grow kale and leave some to bloom for the bees.

Which weeds should people keep?
Dandelions, little daisies in the lawn, anything bees visit that you can live with. Goldenrod is one of the best because it blooms late, as do asters.

How can people create housing for bees?
About 30 per cent of native bees nest in cavities. Leave a rotting wood stump or drill different sized holes in a log. Seventy per cent of native bees nest in the ground, so leave some of the soil bare for them to nest in.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Lori Weidenhammer, author of Victory Gardens for Bees, says even a city balcony can help the bee population. HANDOUT

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Tips for a budget-friendly garden

Frank Ferragine, a.k.a. Frankie Flowers of Breakfast Television Toronto is the author of the new book Food to Grow: A simple, no-fail guide to growing your own vegetables, fruits and herbs. SHANNON ROSS/ HARPERCOLLINS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

VEGETABLES

What will - and won't - grow in your DIY urban garden

The Victoria Day long weekend marks the start of gardening season for many, and for those on a budget, it's a chance to plant vegetable seeds or plants that can help with grocery bills for years to come.

Gardening/weather expert Frank Ferragine, a.k.a. Frankie Flowers of Breakfast Television Toronto, says his No. 1 recommendation for veggies that will produce a big bounty for a good price is the tomato.

"The best one to do for that is called the Early Girl and I would recommend the Early Girl bush variety, so then it won't take up a lot of space," he says.

"Then swiss chard. It's super cheap, easy to grow from seed or you can buy it as a plant; every time you cut it, it's going to sprout back again, so you don't have to do multiple plantings."

Ferragine provides a wealth of gardening advice in his new book, Food to Grow: A simple, no-fail guide to growing your own vegetables, fruits and herbs.

His other budget-friendly veggie recommendations include kale, which can be harvested well into December and sweetens in flavour as it gets colder.

"The side shoots are really easy to harvest and you can do long durations of harvest," he says.

"Word of warning is, after it gets real cold and if we go through a warm spell, there's nothing worse than the smell of rotting kale. So if it's at the front entrance of your home ... you just pull it."

For something quick to harvest, try radishes or spinach.

"Those are an early crop, so you can even group those together," says Ferragine.

> **The number one thing is the sun. The more sun you have, the better it's going to be.**
> Frank Ferragine

"Even if you don't have a lot of space — and let's say you have a perennial garden — you could sow some spinach and radishes in a perennial garden and then harvest them before the perennials grow into that space."

He also recommends herbs, which provide multiple harvests.

Parsley in particular is easy to grow and can be used for many dishes like tabbouleh.

"The number one failure is that people put them in too small of a pot," says Ferragine.

For apartment and condo dwellers, he recommends grouping four or five herbs used most often into at least a 10-inch pot with ample drainage.

"The number one thing is the sun," he says. "The more sun you have, the better it's going to be."

Spinach, lettuces, tomatoes, peppers, bush beans and scarlet runner beans are also great for balconies.

As for cauliflower, which soared in price a few months ago, it's not difficult to grow but it does take up space and requires summer maintenance.

"In order for the cauliflower to remain white, you have to take the leaves, bunch them together and tie them with an elastic and that's what keeps them white," he says.

The one item he doesn't recommend growing in a city is corn, which restricts light, attracts raccoons and is often locally grown and readily available at an affordable cost anyway.

Ferragine says the key is taking the time to figure out: "What do I eat and what do I eat a lot of?" Then it's drafting a plan with the hard-fixed costs.

"A lot of people want to save their own money by growing a vegetable garden and you can, but I say it's kind of like an RRSP where it's kind of a long-haul," he says.

"So the first year when you go and you build that garden, there's going to be some upfront costs.... The second and third year is where you really start saving money."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro SPORTS

"We're not for sale, but let me tell you what. If somebody shows up with $4 billion, we can talk": Dana White on reports UFC is up for sale

Lowry lowers the boom

RAPTORS
TORONTO LEADS 3-2

Point guard hits late buckets, DeRozan ices game from line

GAME 5 At ACC

99	91

For the first time in perhaps the entire post-season, Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan both played like all-stars.

And now the Toronto Raptors are one victory away from the NBA Eastern Conference final.

DeRozan scored 34 points, while Lowry had 25 to lift the Raptors 99-91 over the Heat on Wednesday. They head back to Miami with a 3-2 lead in their best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinal.

A win in Friday's Game 6 and the Raptors will play in the conference final for the first time in the team's 21-year history.

Dwyane Wade led Miami with 20.

In what's turned into a series of attrition, the Raptors are without Jonas Valanciunas for the series (ankle), and DeRozan is battling a thumb injury. The Heat are missing starting centre Hassan Whiteside (knee).

Lowry and DeRozan's solid shooting sparked an early 20-point Raptors lead, before the Heat cut it to 10 with a 16-2 run that straddled the second and third quarter.

The Raptors headed into the fourth up 75-62, but back-to-back three-pointers from Josh Richardson cut the lead to seven points. DeRozan took a hard hit to his bad thumb, and made a beeline for the locker-room. But he returned with four minutes to play, to a warm ovation, and was huge in his return.

Wade scored Miami's final eight points, and cut the Heat's deficit to one point with two minutes to play.

But DeRozan scored 13 of the Raptors' fourth-quarter points, while Lowry had seven, including a three-point dagger with 53 seconds left that he followed up with another long jumper that had the Air Canada Centre crowd roaring.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ACHES, PAINS

DeMarre Carroll left with a wrist injury late in the third quarter.

Carroll crashed to the ground after running into a Miami player attempting to set a block. He headed to the Toronto locker-room and did not return, but the Raptors said X-rays were negative.

Raptors point guard Kyle Lowry scores a layup against the Heat's Dwyane Wade on Wednesday. RON TURENNE/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

NHL PLAYOFFS

Kessel part of powerful Pens trio

The line that sent the Pittsburgh Penguins full throttle into the Eastern Conference final wasn't even on the roster a year ago.

Phil Kessel was stuck in Toronto, where his undeniable talent but occasionally questionable commitment made the three-time all-star an easy scapegoat for a organization in freefall. Carl Hagelin was weeks away from getting shipped from the New York Rangers to Anaheim, where a four-year contract extension promised a new beginning that lasted barely half a season. Nick Bonino was finishing up a solid but not spectacular year in Vancouver.

Phil Kessel GETTY IMAGES

Fast forward 12 months and there they were on Tuesday night, doing all the right things at all the right times, including Bonino's tap-in goal 6:32 into overtime to end six taut games against the Washington Capitals and send the Penguins to the conference finals for the second time in four years.

Coach Mike Sullivan hooked up the hard-shooting Kessel with the pragmatic Bonino and the liquid-skating Hagelin — all acquired in trades by general manager Jim Rutherford that now seem largely one-sided — only after centre Evgeni Malkin injured his left elbow in mid-March. Over the last two months they have developed an eclectic chemistry while taking the burden off Malkin and captain Sidney Crosby.

While the Capitals focused much of their defensive attention on Pittsburgh's franchise cornerstones — and largely succeeded by holding Crosby and Malkin to a combined four points in the series — Washington could do little against a line symbolic of a team that rebuilt itself on the fly.

Hagelin, Kessel and Bonino combined for all four of Pittsburgh's goals in the decider and finished with seven over the course of six games, nearly half of the Penguins' total.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Blue Jays fall in extras, denied sweep of Giants

The Blue Jays had their hands full facing Giants ace Madison Bumgarner on Wednesday. THEARON W. HENDERSON/GETTY IMAGES

Buster Posey might have just been a little weary after catching his second 13-inning game in five days. After struggling the past few games, he took the walk.

"It's a win," he said. "You get to the point about 4-1/2 hours in, does it really matter?"

His walk on four straight balls with the bases loaded in the 13th inning let the San Francisco Giants salvage one victory in their three-game series with the Toronto Blue Jays, winning 5-4 on Wednesday.

Brandon Belt was hit by a pitch to open the inning and

WEDNESDAY In S.F.

5	4
GIANTS	BLUE JAYS

Denard Span's bunt attempt was mishandled at second. Following a wild pitch, Joe Panik was walked intentionally.

Matt Duffy lined out to first base before Posey took the walk from Ryan Tepera (0-1).

Madison Bumgarner pitched 6-2/3 solid innings, allowing one run on three hits. He owns a 1.87 ERA over his last five starts.

Michael Saunders led off the ninth with a home run to straightaway centre against closer Santiago Casilla.

"Your whole goal is to try to win the series, on the road especially," Saunders said. "All season long, you win the first two and you try to get greedy, get the third one. It just didn't go our way."

Josh Donaldson collected four hits, walked and scored a pair of runs for the Blue Jays.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Argos can't wait to utilize Jones

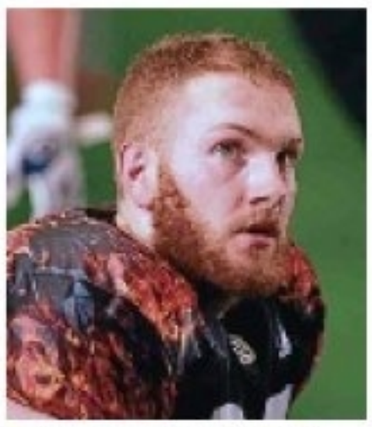
CFL DRAFT

First-rounder's diverse talents give Toronto 'a different look'

Like so many other CFL hopefuls, Brian Jones was on guard when he sat down in front of the Toronto Argonauts in March to take part in the draft combine's interviews.

"I'll be honest. I was pretty nervous for that one. That's the one that everyone's kind of like, 'Oh man, the Toronto interview,'" Jones said on Wednesday, after the Argos took the Acadia University wide receiver fourth overall in Tuesday's Canadian draft.

The Argos interview is a mental wringer for young players. Coach Scott Milanovich and general manager Jim Barker dive right into the tough, pointed questions. One interview at this year's combine started with the team asking a running back: Why were you such a bad blocker last year?



Brian Jones was drafted from Nova Scotia's Acadia University. PAWEL DWULIT/CFL.CA

In those moments, the Argos hope, character is revealed.

"For me, I was kind of lucky," Jones said. "They opened up to me and they were honest. I wouldn't say they were poking at anything. They were just doing everything they could to see my character and it was good, it was a fun interview."

> **He's just a very versatile guy.**
> Argos GM Jim Barker on Brian Jones

At six-foot-four and 230 pounds, Jones had 45 catches for 630 yards and four touchdowns last year, part of a second-team All-Canadian season.

"He gives us a different look," Barker said in a conference call Wednesday. "He's a versatile guy. He's big, he's fast and he's physical. He's got all the attributes you want."

Just 22, Jones has the option of going back to the Axemen to finish out his university career in the fall. For now, Barker sees Jones as a fixture on special teams. Down the road, Barker said he could see Jones moving from the inside slot to a wider spot in the receiving corps.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PREMIER LEAGUE KONE CARRIES SUNDERLAND TO SAFETY Lamine Kone gets taken for a ride by his Sunderland teammates after scoring the third goal in 3-0 rout of guest Everton on Wednesday in northeast England. Sunderland secured another season in the English Premier League therefore relegating Norwich and rival Newcastle. SCOTT HEPPELL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Former Jays lefty Norris returns to Tigers roster

Daniel Norris returned to the Detroit Tigers on Wednesday for the first time since surgery to remove a cancerous growth from his thyroid.

The 23-year-old former Blue Jays pitcher had the procedure in October after making 13 starts during his second season in the majors. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eugenie through, Milos out

Eugenie Bouchard reached the third round of the Italian Open with an upset of second seed Angelique Kerber on Wednesday, while fellow Canadian Milos Raonic was ousted by nemesis Nick Kyrgios.

Raonic fell 7-6 (5), 6-3 to Kyrgios, who has won three straight matches against the Canadian. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Russia calls for crushed Caps

The Russian Hockey Federation says it is calling up Alex Ovechkin and Washington Capitals teammates Evgeny Kuznetsov and Dmitry Orlov for the world championships.

The Capitals lost in six games to the Pittsburgh Penguins in the second round of the NHL playoffs on Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Flatbread Pizza

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This is one of those dishes that doesn't really require a recipe. A flatbread pizza is an easy end of day meal win because it uses leftovers and comes together easy.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
- 1 large flatbread
- 1/3 cup pasatta (lightly seasoned, pureed tomatoes)
- 6 mushrooms, sliced thinly
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup ricotta
- 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- 1/3 zucchini, sliced with a vegetable peeler into ribbons
- 1/2 cup Parmesan, grated
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions
1. Preheat the oven to 400. Arrange all your ingredients on your flatbread and bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until crust is golden brown and vegetables are fork tender.

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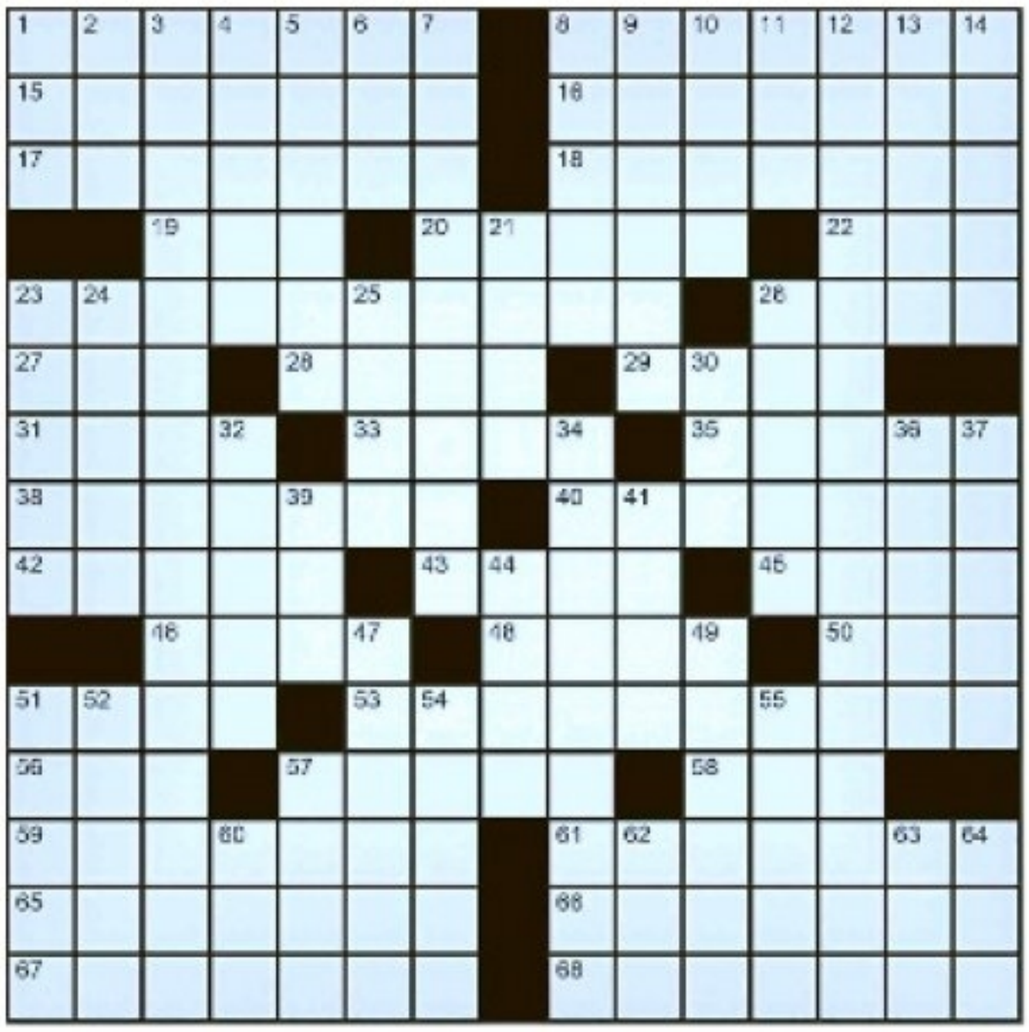
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Belonging to Massachusetts' capital city
8. Shoppers Drug Mart: __ Card
15. Undetected, like some fighter aircraft
16. Wealth
17. To the point
18. __ Pops (Candy-filled treats on a stick)
19. Six and Eight separator, wee-ly
20. Harped on
22. Incurred
23. Canadian magazine since 1928
26. Coastal birds
27. Former military General's abbr.
28. Some rodents
29. Jean Arp's art
31. Dismounted
33. Livelinesses
35. Posh sofa
38. Miami's locale
40. Sugar pill, in clinical trials
42. Gin and __
43. Function
45. Larger __ life
46. __ acetate (Banana oil)
48. Challenger
50. Devoured
51. Mr. Mineo's
53. No need for the whispers, it's a known thing: 2 wds.
56. Will Smith movie
57. __ 99 (Maxwell Smart's colleague)
58. Male swan
59. Cough drop
61. Cut from the Coast: 2 wds.
13. Alliance
14. Gets introduced to
21. Bit of bangs
23. Artsy creation
24. Adele tune
25. Force in California's largest city [acronym]
26. Decree
30. Inman's love in "Cold Mountain" (2003)
32. Crops
34. Wood worker's woes
36. Taper off
37. Three trios
39. Glacial
41. Spike and Bruce
44. Stove
47. Lumberjack
49. Food formula
51. Beauty parlour
52. Flying solo
54. Baby bird sounds
55. Terra __ flower pots
57. 'A' of AM
60. Founded, for short
62. "See Saw Margery __" (18th-century nursery rhyme)
63. Mr. Geller
64. Downing's political address number in Britain
65. '__ __ Beyond...': 1979 album for British ska band Madness
66. 1981 Blondie hit
67. Empty __ (Couples with unused-extra-bedrooms)
68. Administer an oath of office: 2 wds.

DOWN
1. Particular letters for a grad
2. Prefix to 'logist' (Ear doctor)
3. Tells a tabloid type of tale
4. Be silent, in music
5. !-ending musical
6. Days opp.
7. Cry: 3 wds.
8. Frequently
9. Combined, as resources
10. Horse gait
11. Cousin __
12. Newfoundland town on the Kittiwake

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
You might see new uses for something that you own today because you're in a resourceful frame of mind. You might act on an old idea you had for making money.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Take a realistic look in the mirror today to see how you can improve your appearance. What you see might be something you have been thinking about doing for a while.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is an excellent day for research, because you will apply yourself diligently to whatever it is you are looking for. Yes, you'll be like a dog with a bone.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You might attract someone very powerful to you today. This person might say something that actually causes you to modify your goals for the future.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Conversations with bosses, parents and VIPs will be memorable today. Quite likely, they will ask you about old business. Perhaps they want you to account for something.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you discuss politics, religion or racial issues today, you will get serious. Likewise, this is a good day to study thoughtful subjects.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You might see a new way to tackle problems about inheritances or shared property. Old disputes might be solved now because of a new way of thinking.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Discussions with others are powerful today. This might be because you are coming on strong or because others are coming on strong. Whatever happens, listen carefully.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Look for ways to introduce improvements and reforms at work, because you will see them today. Likewise, you might see ways to improve your own health.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You might have a romantic obsession today. Be careful, because this kind of fantasy can overtake your sense of perspective and reality. Try to see things as they really are.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Your ideas about how to make improvements at home probably are solid. Talk to a family member to get agreement with someone. Then it will be all systems go.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You have penetrating insights into whatever you think about or talk about today, because your mind is like a laser. You see the reasons behind things, the subtext.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

		9			6		4	
			5				7	1
8		7		1	3			
	7				2	9		6
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	1		9			5		

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3	2	1	5	8	4	7	9	6
8	9	6	3	7	1	5	4	2
6	4	2	9	5	8	1	3	7
1	5	8	2	3	7	9	6	4
7	3	9	1	4	6	2	5	8
5	8	7	4	6	9	3	2	1
9	1	4	7	2	3	6	8	5
2	6	3	8	1	5	4	7	9

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